



September 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As Congress works toward the next stimulus bill, please consider the needs of the senior living industry; the owners and operators who provide housing and care in assisted living, independent living, memory care and continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) to the most vulnerable to COVID-19 in our society. They have been serving on the front lines of this pandemic since late February-early March, working tirelessly and compassionately to keep safe the almost 1.9 million residents who call “senior living” home and the close to 1 million employees who serve them. The annual financial impact of these efforts is on track to reach \$17 billion dollars. Without relief, this is unsustainable.

The American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) has been requesting from Congress necessary financial relief to help offset these losses of our member companies, priority access to PPE and affordable reliable testing access. To date, this industry has not received a meaningful level of financial relief from the CARES Act (2% of patient revenues has recently been allocated for distribution to a segment of the industry, not nearly enough to recognize the significant costs required to combat this virus), we have not been prioritized for PPE and while we continue to source our own testing capacity through private labs, there is some movement at HHS to deliver limited antigen rapid testing supplies to assisted living. This piecemeal approach is unacceptable and could severely hinder the ability to remain viable as this pandemic continues to be a public health crisis.

Despite these challenges, we strive to keep our communities safe and residents socially engaged in this unpredictable environment. But we need help and we need it now. Most other industries, such as hospitals and nursing homes, who are also serving on the front lines of this crisis and are well deserved, have received significant financial assistance. We request the same for the senior living industry. This can be done in the following ways:

- Allocate at least \$5 billion of HHS Provider Fund grant money to the senior living providers who are serving on the front lines of this pandemic for their additional expense and lost revenue. This represents a fraction of actual expenses/lost revenue to the industry.
- Direct the distribution of rapid result testing kits for delivery and reimbursement to senior living communities to test staff and residents as part of a national Testing Strategy. Include access to vaccines when available.
- Expand the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to permit senior living operators who employ less than 500 employees per location access to the program.

The senior living industry is committed to continuing to do whatever it takes to limit exposure and protect the health of their residents and staff. They should be prioritized for all relief programs established by Congress in the next emergency bill. When we keep people out of the hospital, the overall health care system benefits.

Congressional support for funding has been strong as evidenced by the attached compilation of letters. It is time to put that support into action and include a direct funding stream to the senior living industry. We are part of the solution, but we need help.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



David Schless  
President  
American Seniors Housing Association

CC: Rep. Richard Neal, Chair, House Ways & Means Committee  
Rep. Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee  
Rep. Nita Lowey, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations  
Rep. Kay Granger, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations  
Rep. Rosa DeLauro, Chair of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations  
Rep. Tom Cole, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations  
Rep. Lloyd Doggett, Chair of the Subcommittee on Health, House Ways & Means Committee  
Rep. Devin Nunes, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health, House Ways & Means Committee

Enclosure: Examples of Bi-Partisan Congressional Support for Senior Living Financial Relief, PPE and Testing

## **Examples of Bi-Partisan Congressional Support for Senior Living Financial Relief, PPE and Testing**

### **Rep. Matthew Cartwright (D-8-PA) and 54 House Members of Congress letter to HHS Secretary Azar**

*“Senior living communities, however, have yet to be recognized by with an allocation of funds from the Department of HHS for their service and significant financial outlays for their residents. To date, Medicare providers, hospitals, rural and “hot spot” health care facilities, Indian health care entities, the uninsured, nursing homes, and Medicaid providers have all been allocated funds to help with their expenses. It is critical that operators of senior living communities, which include assisted living, memory care, independent living, and continuing care retirement communities, now also be recognized for the significant efforts they are making to keep their residents and employees safe.”*

### **Rep. Robin Kelly (D-2-IL) to Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer**

*Given the importance of senior living facilities and the vulnerable populations they serve, I ask that you make the needs of senior living facilities a priority in the next COVID-19 relief bill by allocating specific PRF aid to these institutions and urge HHS to allow senior living facilities to qualify for existing PRF aid.*

### **Rep. Kay Granger (R- 12-TX), Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee Op-ed in The Hill**

*“But these senior living facilities have still not been prioritized by HHS for financial relief. They have not been prioritized for PPE, or for testing supplies, and I fear once a vaccine is approved, they will continue to be overlooked. Instead, these senior living facilities have had to source their own supplies and testing capabilities and have incurred significant expenses in that process from not being able to move in new residents. They should have the same access to rapid results testing kits and supplies of PPE and funding as nursing homes. This would allow these senior living facilities to first test both residents and staff to find out who is COVID-19 positive and then to use PPE supplies to combat the disease and contain its spread”.*

### **Sen. James Lankford (R-OK) and 26 Senators letter to HHS Secretary Azar**

*“We are writing to express our support for all of our nation’s deserving health care providers who will in short time begin to apply for the much-needed financial relief programs of the CARES Act, specifically the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF). As you set your guidelines for this program, we request that those who care for our nation’s most vulnerable not be overlooked. We are specifically referring to the millions of our nation’s seniors who are cared for by the hardworking men and women who work in facilities such as nursing homes, skilled nursing centers, as well those serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In addition, we must not overlook those individuals who work within the senior living community, such as those working in independent living, assisted living, memory care and continuing care retirement communities.”*

**Rep Vern Buchanan (R-16-FL) letter to HHS Secretary Azar**

*“Senior living communities, while neither nursing homes nor hospitals, employ nearly 900,000 staff who are working diligently and compassionately to care for almost two million seniors at heightened risk of severe illness and death by COVID-19. These facilities house a significant percentage of our nation’s veterans and their spouses, and we should not overlook them in this time of unique need.*

*We urge you to recognize senior living communities as a necessary defense against this disease that’s attacking our nation. With adequate PPE, testing kits, and working capital, they can help hold down infection and death rates, and, in doing so, keep many seniors out of hospitals, unburdening hospital emergency departments and COVID care divisions.”*

**Rep. Jennifer Wexton (D-10-VA) and 39 House Members of Congress letter to Congressional Leaders**

*“The staff and residents in long-term care facilities require immediate support to get them through this crisis. Providing additional funding for the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund in the next package with the needs of these providers in mind is critical to protecting the elderly and the most vulnerable throughout the country from COVID-19.”*

**Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) April 24, 2020 Facebook Post**

*“Maine nursing homes, senior living facilities, and homes for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities need additional support to protect residents and employees from COVID-19. I joined a bipartisan group of nearly 30 Senators calling on HHS to provide these communities with the resources they need.”*

**Rep. Michael Burgess (R-26-TX) and 35 House Members of Congress letter to HHS Secretary Azar**

*“The providers in nursing homes, skilled nursing centers, senior living communities, independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities are on the front lines of providing critical health care services for these vulnerable individuals during normal times, but especially during a pandemic. These facilities are deserving of support to aid them in their COVID-19 response to ensure the health and safety of their residents and their medical staff”.*

**Sen Steve Daines (R-MT) Letter to HHS Secretary Azar**

*“Communities are facing increased costs for personal protective equipment, testing, infection control, and labor to meet the demands. Many of these costs skyrocket if a resident or staff member tests positive for the virus. The healthcare heroes in these communities are on the front lines of this crisis, and while they continue to do everything they can to care for our nation’s seniors and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, they need financial relief. I appreciate the allocations that the Administration has already made to numerous healthcare providers in Montana and throughout this country, and believe it is critical that we ensure all communities caring for our most vulnerable have access to these much-needed funds.”*