



January 27, 2021

Dear Acting Secretary Cochran:

On behalf of the American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA), I would like to express our appreciation for President Biden's commitment to a national strategy to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including efforts to increase vaccine production and distribution. I would also like to thank you and your team at HHS for officially extending the Public Health Emergency (PHE) for the next 90 days and acknowledging the PHE will remain in place for the entirety of 2021. As you stated in your letter to the state governors, "Predictability and stability are important given the foundation and flexibilities offered to states that are tied to the designation of the PHE Response."

Predictability and stability are also important to the ongoing operations and services of the senior living industry. I would like to call to your attention to the significant work our industry has done and continues to do on the front lines of this pandemic to keep the almost 2 million residents and 1 million staff safe in our senior living communities. COVID-19 has hit senior living communities especially hard given the vulnerable population we serve. To date, federal financial relief to these settings has been minimal yet the virus rages on and our response efforts must continue.

As the agency begins to work through its agenda, I ask that you recognize the ongoing efforts of the senior living industry and allocate to them additional assistance from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF). A meaningful level of support in the Phase 4 distribution is not only necessary to their recovery but will offer stability and predictability to their operations as they continue their fight against COVID-19.

For the last 11 months, our communities did not shut down but rather stepped up to the challenges of COVID-19. Additional expenses such as additional staffing, PPE, tests, enhanced infection control, etc., soared and new move-ins were curtailed, causing significant revenue declines. Occupancy levels have hit historic lows and costs continue to mount. While the vaccine offers the promise of better days ahead, many senior living communities have not yet had their first vaccination clinic. Without the necessary relief, this is not a sustainable business model.

Our industry was among the last to be allocated financial relief from the PRF in 2020. It is estimated that through Phase 2 and 3 Distribution, approximately \$1 billion was delivered to assisted living companies for their 1st and 2nd quarter expenses and lost revenue. While this relief is much appreciated, industry analysts estimate the annual financial impact of COVID-19 to the industry is approximately \$17 billion.

This is why we urge your attention and seek additional funds from the estimated \$30 billion remaining in the PRF. There are very few sources of federal financial relief available to our members and securing additional funding from the PRF is critical to our recovery from this public health crisis. Please reach out to Jeanne McGlynn Delgado at jeanne@seniorshousing.org with questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'David Schless'.

David Schless
President

ABOUT ASHA

ASHA is the leading national association exclusively dedicated to supporting companies operating professionally managed, resident-centered and predominately private pay senior living communities. Our member companies offer the full range of senior living communities including independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities. ASHA represents over 550 companies who collectively own and operate more than 700,000 units across the country