



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

On behalf of the American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA), I would like to congratulate you on your confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and to offer our assistance as you develop and implement programs and policies relative to long term care and specifically, senior living. Our members own and operate the full range of professionally managed senior living communities including independent living, assisted living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities. ASHA represents over 500 companies who collectively own and operate more than 700,000 units across the country.

As we mark the one-year anniversary of this pandemic, I ask that you please recognize the senior living providers and staff who have been serving on the front lines of this pandemic from the very beginning. They have worked 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. These providers are determined to survive this crisis so they can effectively continue to care for the millions of older adults who need housing and services in the coming years. However, right now, they need your help to achieve this.

The costs associated with COVID-19 planning, prevention and response cannot be overstated and while we are grateful for the estimated \$1 billion allocation from the \$178 billion Provider Relief Fund (PRF), it is not enough. We anticipate the annual financial impact due to additional expenses and revenue loss to reach \$14 billion - \$17 billion. Small and large, urban and rural providers have been significantly impacted by the financial stress and some will simply not survive. The devastating financial impact of COVID on senior living will have profound policy implications given that 10,000 people are turning 65 every day in the U.S.

These providers need financial relief and your help to secure additional funding from the existing funds that remain in the PRF. Unfortunately, Congress did not replenish the PRF in the American Rescue Plan (ARP), creating an immediate need to prioritize at least \$3 billion - \$5 billion from what is remaining in the Program for these deserving senior living providers.

*There is much congressional support for this request as evidenced in two recent letters sent to you requesting immediate and targeted financial relief that equitably provides resources to these*

*providers. A Senate letter signed by 25 US Senators was led by Senator Sinema (D-AZ) and Senator Collins (R-ME) and a House letter signed by 59 U.S. Representatives led by Rep. Spanberger (D-VA) and Rep Anthony Gonzalez (R-OH) (letters attached).*

This request is critical. The expertise and leadership you bring to this agency is respected and appreciated as you work to implement the Administration's strategy for an effective COVID-19 response. As you continue to take steps to enhance COVID-19 vaccine production and distribution strategies, please consider the needs of the senior living industry that continues to fight this public health crisis on the front lines and take action to allocate a meaningful level of support from the remaining PRF to this industry.

ASHA Leadership would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this request with you and your staff to give you a fuller understanding of the role we played in the pandemic as a component of the greater health care system to save lives. Please respond to me at 202-494-8682 ([david@ashaliving.org](mailto:david@ashaliving.org)), or Jeanne McGlynn Delgado, VP of Government Affairs at 202-841-6044 ([jeanne@ashaliving.org](mailto:jeanne@ashaliving.org)).

Thank you for your consideration. We wish you well in this new and critically important job and look forward to working with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Schless".

David Schless  
President