



July 28, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Michael R. Pence  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol Building, S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol Building, S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear President Trump, Vice President Pence, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Members of Congress:

The coronavirus crisis has been terrifying for all Americans—especially for older adults and the people who care for, serve, and love them. On behalf of over 5,000 faith-based and mission-driven aging and disability service providers across the country, we implore you to immediately deliver the leadership, resources, and support needed to ensure the health and wellbeing of millions of people facing special danger from the pandemic.

Our members have been dealing with these problems firsthand for six months, and know what is needed: a national plan that puts older adults and their care providers at the front of the line right alongside hospitals for life-saving resources like personal protective equipment, testing and significant additional targeted relief. Specifically, we request:

1. Immediate access to ample and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for all providers who serve older Americans and those with disabilities.
2. On demand and fully funded access to accurate and rapid-results testing for care providers.
3. Assurance that states will consider the health and safety of older Americans as they reopen.
4. Funding and support for aging and disability services providers across the continuum of care to support the increased costs of PPE, testing, staffing, isolation, and other care.
5. Pandemic hero pay, paid sick leave, and health care coverage for the heroic frontline workers who are risking their own lives serving older people and those with disabilities during this crisis.

Nearly 100,000 people over 65 have died from COVID-19 in just a few months, and millions more are threatened. The virus has been most deadly for older people of color, and nearly half of all COVID-19 fatalities have been nursing home residents and staff. For months, brave and dedicated workers have delivered care to older Americans, at great risk to their own health and safety.

It is not acceptable to continue on as we have been for months. This is a full-fledged crisis like we've never seen before that will only worsen in the crucial days and months to come.

Our organizations come from multiple faith-based traditions, and many have been deeply embedded in their communities for more than a century. Our members, including skilled nursing, long-term care, home health care, hospice, continuing care retirement communities, community-based services, and the entire field of aging and disability services, have long played a special and critical role in communities across the U.S. We represent mission-driven organizations that are guided by our faith and values to offer meaningful care and support to ensure all our neighbors can reach their potential regardless of age, race, religion or background.

Today we are coming together to urge you to find common ground, and deliver the live-saving relief we need to continue fulfilling our historic role in the lives of so many Americans.

Our organizations represent a diversity of faiths and denominations, but we are aligned in our ardent belief that the actions you as leaders of our country take in the next weeks will determine the life and death of many of our nation's most vulnerable older adults. This is an historic moment. It must be met with historic action. Older adults deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Katie Smith Sloan  
President and CEO  
LeadingAge

Don Shulman  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
AJAS

Michael J. Readinger  
President/ CEO  
The Council for Health & Human Service  
Ministries

Jane Mack  
President & CEO  
Friends Services Alliance

Karen E. Lehman  
President/CEO  
Mennonite Health Services (MHS)

Cynthia L. Ray, M.Div  
Executive Director  
Presbyterian Association of Homes & Services for  
the Aging

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM  
President and CEO  
Catholic Health Association of the United States

David Lawrenz  
Executive Director  
Fellowship of Brethren Homes

Charlotte Haberaecker  
President & CEO  
Lutheran Services in America

Reuben D. Rotman  
President & CEO  
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies

Mary Kemper  
President & CEO  
United Methodist Association of Health &  
Welfare Ministries