



Katie Smith Sloan Remarks
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We're here today because older Americans and the dedicated professionals who care for them have been under mortal threat for over six months.

They have been counting on federal leaders to do everything possible to protect older lives.

And they never imagined that Congress would walk away from them, the very people most threatened by this virus.

Today I'm joined by my colleagues from Indiana, Ohio, Montana and Missouri to share the realities they have been facing on-the-ground as Congress and the Administration are at a standstill. We're also releasing new Situation Reports about the crisis in these four states...

But we could go anywhere in this nation and see the devastating impact of COVID-19 on older adults. I've heard story after story from LeadingAge members around the country about how the virus continues to rage, and how federal assistance has been too often long on promises and short on action.

For example, the Administration recently promised to send COVID-19 testing machines to every one of America's nursing homes. I'm deeply concerned that our members still have many questions about this new antigen testing program. Today, we're releasing a fact sheet on the critical importance of testing in getting the crisis under control -- and the challenges that nursing homes have faced accessing and affording adequate testing for COVID.

We're glad the Administration is acknowledging this vital need and some media reports would lead you to believe that the testing needs of nursing homes are being met. Case closed? Absolutely not. The reality is that six months into this pandemic, we are still not able to test to the extent we need to in order to contain this vicious virus. We are looking for the federal government to deliver -- now.

After six hard months of dealing with patchwork solutions and counting ever-growing numbers of victims of this virus, many of us are feeling numb. But I hope you will remember that these are real people we're talking about. Real lives. We're talking about real families and millions of broken hearts... And care

workers whose jobs now involve holding up a cell phone so that someone can say goodbye to the people they love for the very last time.

So it's time for Congress to get back to work. We need the Senate to pass a relief bill that includes life-saving resources for aging services providers. We need a dedicated fund of \$100 billion devoted to care for older Americans.

When negotiations were underway, Senators said little about ensuring that the needs of older adults would be prioritized--or even addressed.

It's time to put older adults and their care providers at the front of the line, right alongside hospitals for life-saving resources like PPE and testing.

It's time for an end to patchwork policies and half-measures.

The lives of older adults are not expendable.