



February 25, 2022

Secretary Xavier Becerra
Department of Health and Human Services

Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Dear Secretary Becerra and Director Walensky,

Thank you for your leadership as our nation has struggled with COVID-19. We are encouraged by the new framework released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today, as it appears to signal a strategic move from pandemic measures to endemic measures.

Recognizing that today's recommendations are not intended for healthcare settings, we hope you will undertake an expeditious and thorough review of the science and data related to healthcare settings, including long-term care—so that all our country's older adults may move forward with the rest of the nation.

As you know, older adults, particularly those living in long-term care settings, have faced disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have experienced higher rates of severe illness and death due to unique characteristics such as medical comorbidities or congregate living and have suffered from the effects of significant mitigation measures put in place to keep them safe.

Even as the long-term care field has dedicated itself to a cultural shift that places the resident at the center of care planning and decisions, COVID-19 has threatened those gains by forcing officials to revert to a more protective position. Our nation's elders have been subjected to unequal mitigation measures based solely on their place of residence. As COVID-19 measures in surrounding communities have gradually allowed for more freedom and autonomy, long-term care settings have remained under the grip of conservative measures.

As CDC evaluates a safe path forward for our nation's vulnerable individuals served in healthcare settings, we urge you to remember that not all healthcare settings are the same. Long-term care settings are peoples' homes. The older adults who live in long-term care settings deserve the same rights to an endemic lifestyle as those living in the broader community. What's more, our home and community-based healthcare providers need consistent guidance across all the locations they serve (both in congregate care and in people's homes).

I strongly encourage you to quickly review the science and the data, and update recommendations that allow aging services communities to join the rest of our nation in moving toward "getting back to normal." We believe this can be done while still ensuring the health and safety of the people served by the nation's aging services provider.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan".

Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO
LeadingAge