The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2021

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell,

We write to express our concern about potential offsets that we understand are being considered for the bipartisan infrastructure framework. Our members have worked tirelessly to deliver the best care and services for residents at home and in residential settings and for their families since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and unfortunately, they must continue to provide care and services to areas of the country that are seeing increasing caseloads and surges of new variants.

Older Americans and their families rely on skilled nursing facilities, hospice, and home care to provide the care and services they need to maintain their health. We understand that addressing core infrastructure needs can allow us to continue to serve our communities and our clients. However, we share the concerns expressed by other Medicare providers and are opposed to the use of an extension of mandatory Medicare sequestration as a pay-for in any infrastructure package. Additionally, we do not believe that Medicare funds should be used to pay for non-health care programs.

We understand that funds appropriated for COVID-19 support but not expended are also being considered as offsets for infrastructure. Our members have relied and continue to rely on federal support to offset our own increased costs related to caring for older adults who are uniquely susceptible to COVID-19, and the staff that serve them, many of whom come from higher risk and lower-vaccinated communities. In particular, we have been waiting for more than 7 months for HRSA to take applications for and distribute additional provider relief funds to cover financial impacts of the past 12 months. We urge you not to assume that healthcare and aging services providers will not need Provider Relief Funds to address the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Some of these providers are teetering on the brink of closure awaiting relief. For those that close, it is not only the loss of a business and of jobs, but also a disruption in the lives of the older adults and their families who must find a new service provider.

The COVID-19 pandemic to date has infected more than 33 million people and resulted in more than 607,000 deaths. Many of those affected were the people we serve and our staff. Currently, new variants are driving increased COVID cases around the country, especially in parts of the country where there are lower vaccination rates. But, as we all learned, this virus spreads across state borders. LeadingAge members continue to face historic challenges, including significant expenses to test, vaccinate, and treat their clients over the past fifteen months and into the future. Cuts to resources to support those efforts, whether through an extension of mandatory Medicare sequestration or through unspent COVID-19 funds, would have serious consequences on the continued well-being of older adults and those who serve them. We ask you to remove these sources from the list of possible pay-fors for the bipartisan infrastructure agreement.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. We look forward to continuing to work with you during this critical time.

President and CEO
LeadingAge

cc: members, U.S. Senate

About LeadingAge. We represent more than 5,000 aging-focused organizations that touch millions of lives every day. Alongside our members and 38 state partners, we address critical issues by blending applied research, advocacy, education, and community-building. We bring together the most inventive minds in our field to support older adults as they age wherever they call home. We make America a better place to grow old. For more information: www.leadingage.org