



August 4, 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 our six organizations and the millions of older adults we serve and represent, we implore you to immediately deliver the leadership, resources, and support needed to ensure the health, wellbeing, and the very lives of the people we represent and serve every day in this country.

Our organizations 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 (PPE), testing and significant additional targeted relief. Specifically, we request:

1. Immediate access to ample and appropriate PPE for all who serve older adults across all settings of care.
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 services providers across the continuum of care.
5. Pandemic hero pay, paid family and medical leave, and health care coverage for the heroic frontline workers who are risking their own lives serving older people during this crisis.

Nearly 110,000 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.

This is not acceptable. It is a national nightmare like we've never seen—and it's not over yet. We are in the midst of catastrophe with the potential for even greater catastrophe just ahead.

For decades, our nation has undervalued and under-invested in systems/policies that benefit us all as we age. At the outset of this pandemic it was clear that older adults and care workers were at the greatest risk, yet rampant and persistent ageism laid the groundwork for the lives of older Americans to remain ignored.

Our organizations represent a broad range of aging services providers, businesses, health care specialists, researchers, advocates and millions of older adults across the country. Today, we come together to urge you to find common ground, and deliver the life-saving relief desperately needed by older Americans and the people who serve them.

This is a historic moment. It must be met with historic action. What you, the leaders of our country, do in the next weeks will determine the life and death of many of our nation's most vulnerable older adults. Older lives are not expendable. You must act now.

Sincerely,

Katie Smith Sloan  
President and CEO  
LeadingAge

Christopher E. Laxton, CAE  
Executive Director  
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