

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0512

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3202

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0523

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Schumer, Senate Majority McConnell and House Minority Leader McCarthy:

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads throughout the United States and COVID+ patients either return home from hospitals or nursing homes with active symptoms or shelter-in-place with the virus, home and community-based services (HCBS) become more vital than ever in reducing spread and caring for society's most vulnerable. The federal government must provide adequate resources for these services and the workers that provide them.

There are over 2 million home care workers in the U.S., about 90% of whom are women, and more than half of whom are people of color. Home care workers prepare meals, assist with toileting, bathing, dressing, medication, and prevent social isolation for frail elderly individuals and people with disabilities who, without these services, would be in institutional care settings. Home care nurses and home care workers team together to help prevent hospitalizations, enabling clients to stay in their homes and preventing further strain on the healthcare system during the public health crisis. This need is further exacerbated as more individuals requiring long term services and supports elect to stay in their homes and communities instead of risking COVID-19 infection in nursing homes.

Most of the individuals requiring HCBS are immunocompromised and are at increased risk for COVID-19 infection, if not already COVID+. Without the necessary resources, home care workers are potentially exposing themselves, their families and their clients while providing care to thousands of individuals who rely on that care to stay safe in their homes.

We must ensure that the workforce caring for these homebound individuals has adequate resources, including proper personal protective equipment (PPE), access to testing, and enhanced compensation. As you know, this public health crisis will not be over in one wave, and we must be prepared to care for this vulnerable population while also reducing the risk of continued spread to essential workers and their communities.

These vital support services are currently under threat. HCBS providers have experienced significant increased administrative and PPE costs, workforce shortages, and decreased reimbursement revenue, but have been largely left out of recent health care provider relief packages and are not prioritized for PPE.

HCBS providers need additional resources to remain financially stable, to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of workers to care for homebound individuals, and to keep their workforce safe and healthy. We urge Congress to increase FMAP specifically for HCBS to ensure sufficient resources are available, and require the State Medicaid programs to:

- Provide pass-through funding to providers for worker support, including additional compensation and sick pay, childcare and transportation subsidies.

- Reimburse home and community-based services providers for additional COVID- and shutdown- related administrative costs, including telehealth systems, PPE supplies, increased overtime expenses and employee retention

These important initiatives are currently unfunded, and, given the tenuous financial position of most HCBS providers, must be supported by federal and state government funding.

Thank you for your consideration of these funding needs. We urge you to take swift action to provide the needed support for home and community-based services (HCBS) in response to COVID-19.

Respectfully,



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