



March 24, 2020

Dear Governor,

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to present unique challenges to the senior living industry. Argentum is the leading national association representing independent living, assisted living, memory care and continuing care retirement community providers. We are working with all of our member companies and communities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents and staff during this difficult time. However, to do our part to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 we respectfully ask for your immediate attention to our most pressing needs:

- 1. Priority access to Testing** for all employees and residents of senior living. This is crucial if we hope to prevent the disease from spreading. Mobile testing units and skilled personnel that can administer the tests in the senior living communities are needed to ensure the testing of the largely limited-ambulatory population. All residents and staff should be tested immediately if there is a confirmed positive case in the community.
- 2. Increase the availability of Personal Protective Equipment** for all staff working in senior living. In addition to providing the necessary hands on personal and health care, senior living must continue to provide amenities such as meals and housekeeping. Our need for PPE is great to ensure all employees of senior living are protected.
- 3. Help senior living employees meet personal obligations.** The senior living workers are truly heroes. They are caring for seniors while at the same time caring for family members – both young and old. With the majority of schools closed around the country, affordable day care must be made available so our workers, along with first responders and other health care workers, can care for their families and continue receiving a paycheck.

Senior living communities have significant plans in place for emergency situations and follow infection control procedures and protocols every day to prevent transmission of illness. However, during this time of extreme circumstances where immediate attention is critical to focus on prevention and containment of the COVID-19 virus, we need to have the available resources and supports to be effective.

### **Senior Living and COVID-19**

Residents in senior living are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. There are currently 28,900 communities in the United States with more than 811,500 residents calling assisted living home. More than half of all residents are over the age of 85, and another 30% are between the ages of 75-84. They often cope with multiple chronic conditions, with more than half suffering from hypertension and a third with heart disease. Over 42% suffer from some type of cognitive impairment.

Thank you in advance for your attention to the needs of senior living providers. We are honored to care for America's seniors and will continue to provide quality of care and quality of life during these extreme circumstances.

Sincerely,

James Balda  
President & CEO  
Argentum