



September 18, 2020

The Honorable Steve Mnuchin  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin,

Senior living communities care for our nation's most vulnerable populations. Nearly 80 percent of all COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. have occurred in people over the age of 65, making this population among the most vulnerable to the virus. For older adults living in senior living communities—whose average age is 85, the risk is even higher. Many senior living community residents require assistance with activities of daily living, putting them in close contact with direct care workers, and a majority suffer from chronic conditions and comorbidities. Financial resources for these communities to assist in the administration of rapid-testing and vaccines is urgently needed.

Argentum, a national, non-profit association representing over 70 percent of senior living communities, supports choice, independence, dignity and quality of life for all older adults. Our members provide assisted living, memory care, independent living and continuing care services to almost 2 million seniors and employ almost 1 million workers. To combat the spread of the virus, senior living operators have taken extraordinary measures and suffered billions of dollars in financial loss. Senior living communities are not nursing homes, but we care for and protect the same vulnerable populations.

We thank the Administration for its strong leadership in combating this virus. We are encouraged by the recent announcement to prioritize and deliver rapid response antigen tests to assisted living communities. Though the financial losses of senior living operators continue to mount, the recent distribution for assisted living facilities in the Provider Relief Fund is also greatly appreciated. As these communities continue to sustain massive financial losses, it is important to note that they care for the same vulnerable populations as other long-term care facilities (such as skilled nursing facilities) yet have received only a fraction of federal relief.

Secretary Mnuchin, as the Administration works toward its goal of rapid-testing and vaccination to abate the pandemic in senior communities, please know that our members are with you. Our industry will be the cornerstone for implementing rapid testing, vaccinations and overall abating the virus in the senior communities. To be effective, however, urgent financial resources are needed. The costs of caring for those most at risk of infection cannot be overstated, and current financial losses are simply not sustainable.

Based on industry estimates, upfront COVID-19 related expenses related to community population needs for testing, staffing and personal protective equipment will surpass \$11 billion. To win the COVID-19 battle, senior living communities and the workforce that cares for this vulnerable population must be prioritized, and additional funds for the Provider Relief Fund is critical.



To meet immediate and urgent needs, however, Argentum is calling on Congress and the Administration to allocate at a minimum, an additional \$5 billion in necessary funding to senior living providers to ensure that rapid testing, screening, and ultimately vaccinations can be effectively implemented. We also strenuously urge that additional funding is placed in the Provider Relief Fund in another relief package. We need to ensure that our nation's seniors receive the support they need now and in the future. With your help we can and will continue to protect America's seniors. Thank you for your efforts to prioritize our nation's seniors.

Sincerely,

James Balda  
President & CEO  
Argentum

