



November 3, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

America's seniors desperately need your help. Assisted living and memory care facilities, which care for nearly two million seniors by nearly one million caregivers, have been left behind time and again for COVID-19 relief and have consistently not received the same levels of support as other care providers. It is critical that your administration step up now, prioritize Provider Relief Fund dollars to these facilities, and ensure that these providers are not left behind again for vaccine and booster administration or in the forthcoming human infrastructure package.

Argentum is the largest national association representing assisted living, independent living, memory care, and continuing care retirement communities which provide round-the-clock care for seniors who need assistance with daily activities, such as bathing, dressing, and taking medications. The average age of residents in these facilities is 85 and a majority suffer from chronic conditions and comorbidities, all of which make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. These frontline caregivers have gone above and beyond to keep their vulnerable residents safe, incurring more than \$30 billion in expenses and losses from purchasing PPE, testing, infection prevention and control, staffing, and record-low occupancy rates. Yet, they have received woefully little in federal relief (less than 0.4% of the provider relief fund has been allocated to assisted living providers).

Your administration can and must correct this serious oversight. The current round of funding includes administrative flexibility, including the ability to target bonus payments based on the amount of services that providers furnish to Medicare patients. We ask that as application data is reviewed to determine a methodology for the Phase 4 payments, the significant number of Medicare beneficiaries who receive direct care as residents of senior living facilities is factored this into the bonus payments intended for providers serving seniors. Further, we ask for your support of a sustainability fund that would ensure these providers are able to weather the financial challenges posed by COVID-19 and adequately prepare for the coming long-term care needs of our nation's seniors.

Separately, these frontline caregivers critically need support for the administration of vaccines and boosters, particularly without the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program (PPLTCP) reconstituted. These providers have been left behind to administer vaccines to their largely non-ambulatory population who are unable to travel to outside clinics and are hampered by other logistical challenges. Additional support is also needed for ongoing testing to mitigate the spread of the virus, as previous federal and state support programs cease.

And lastly, we urge you to insist on the inclusion of assisted living in your administration's Build Back Better plan. Despite your urging, including in a May 3 official statement, that assisted living specifically be included as part of the "Robust Investments in the Caregiving Economy,"



the fact is that they have continued to be left out of the legislative text. As negotiations move forward, it is imperative that investments in the nation's care infrastructure include assisted living, particularly with regard to workforce development, such as those proposed in the SENIOR Act, to better meet the growing demands in caring for our rapidly aging population.

Mr. President, after being left behind time and again, America's seniors cannot afford to wait any longer. They need your help and your assurances that they will have the resources and support to combat COVID-19 and meet their care needs now and into the future. Please do not leave these seniors and their care providers behind again.

Sincerely,

James Balda
President & CEO
Argentum