



September 1, 2021

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

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Ms. Andrea Palm
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear President Biden, Secretary Becerra, and Deputy Secretary Palm:

As the administration continues its efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, we are reaching out to ask for your continued attention on the needs of our nation's assisted living caregivers and the vulnerable seniors for whom they care. These assisted living and memory/Alzheimer's care facilities, offering choice, dignity, security, and comfort in the final years of life, have been on the frontlines for more than a year and a half and are in critical need of assistance from the provider relief fund.

On behalf of Argentum, the leading national association representing 70% of the nation's senior living communities, **we implore you to immediately release the next phase of the provider relief fund (PRF) as quickly and equitably as possible.** Unfortunately, many facilities are facing extreme financial hardship as a result of the pandemic, and more than half are anticipating closures. Relief to date has been disproportionately insufficient (less than 0.4% of PRF was allocated to assisted living providers according to a March 2021 report from the Government Accountability Office), and further, many providers have not received the full amount of relief that is owed based on the established formulas, or in other cases were denied for relief altogether.

Relief is critically needed to offset direct costs such as: acquisition of PPE, medical equipment, cleaning and disposable food service supplies, enhanced cleaning and environmental sanitation costs, increased labor expense, increased workers compensation and health plan expenses, increased insurance premiums and retention, consulting and professional services costs and non-covered costs for COVID-19 testing of residents and team members, in addition to the lost revenue resulting from unprecedented declines in occupancy rates. Altogether, we project that these expenses and losses have exceeded \$30 billion through June 2021.

We are very concerned that if relief is not disbursed that many providers may have no other option than to close, potentially forcing seniors from their homes and caregivers from their livelihoods. Uprooting seniors, whose average age is 85 and depend on daily assistance with activities such as eating, bathing and toileting, would be nothing short of tragic. Particularly with the rise in the Delta variant, we need to do everything possible to keep our most vulnerable seniors safe and secure.

We sincerely appreciate the attention that this administration has brought toward ending the pandemic, including the heroic efforts on vaccination. Our providers have been proud to be part of these efforts and have led the way to overall vaccination rates higher than 99% of all U.S. counties, resulting in over 90% of residents and more than 7 out of 10 workers being vaccinated. But defeating this pandemic is going to need more than just vaccinations – it's going to need direct relief



to those on the frontlines serving those who are most at-risk of COVID-19. For this reason, on behalf of our members, we are asking that these providers, who have taken extraordinary measures to ensuring the safety of residents and staff during this challenging time, have access to relief funds in a timely and equitable manner.

Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

James Balda
President & CEO
Argentum

