



October 19, 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,

On behalf of the nearly two million seniors and their nearly one million caregivers in our nation's assisted living and memory care facilities, we write to ask you to correct a past inequity. The seniors and the caregivers who serve these facilities have been left out of nearly all federal COVID relief to date; now, the vast majority operate at a financial loss. Mr. President, as the Administration distributes Provider Relief Fund dollars, provides booster vaccinations and fights for senior care in a human infrastructure package, we ask for your unyielding attention to ensure these facilities are not left behind again.

Unfortunately, these facilities that have been on the frontlines of the pandemic for more than a year and a half have not had equitable access to federal relief. In fact, senior living facilities have been consistently left behind and have not received the same levels of support and assistance in the COVID-19 response as other care providers. It wasn't until six months after the CARES Act was signed into law that facilities were even allowed to apply for funding, and federal relief has remained disproportionately insufficient, with less than 0.4% of the provider relief fund allocated to assisted living providers (according to a March 2021 report from the Government Accountability Office). This is substantially less than nursing homes serving a similar number of high-risk seniors, and even less than other providers such as dentists that are not providing 24/7 direct care to seniors. Through June 2021, we project that senior living providers have incurred at least \$30 billion in expenses and losses due to COVID-19, with only \$1 billion allocated to offset this.

Similarly, we are concerned that senior living facilities are being left behind for critically needed support in administering booster vaccines. Senior living facilities were able to achieve such high levels of vaccination (higher than 99% of all U.S. counties) in part due to Priority 1a classification for long-term care made by the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). And despite some initial equity issues in accessing these vaccines, particularly for independent living facilities, the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program (PPLTCP) was a critical part in achieving such high vaccine rates. Yet, inexplicably, that program has not been renewed for administration of boosters, leaving these providers on their own to protect their largely non-ambulatory residents who are unable to travel to outside clinics. Facilities are also continuing to have issues procuring affordable testing supplies that are critical for mitigating spread of the virus, and many state-based testing programs have ceased.

Additionally, we are increasingly concerned that senior living will be left behind in the forthcoming infrastructure packages as part of your administration's Build Back Better initiative. We greatly appreciated the proposed investments of \$400 billion towards our nation's care needs in the American Jobs Plan, and your inclusion of assisted living as an integral component of the long-term care spectrum. As you know, these investments cannot wait any longer; providers must be adequately prepared for the rapidly increasing need for long-term care, with the number of people over age 65 is projected to grow to 94.7 million by 2060 and a 52%



chance that a person will need LTC during his or her lifetime. Yet, as negotiations progress, these critically needed investments may be left behind.

We believe that each of these oversights can be corrected with your leadership, ensuring that our nation's vulnerable seniors are not left behind again:

- 1. Target financial relief through Phase 4 of the PRF and a longer-term sustainability fund.** 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.
- 2. Long-term care investments / Workforce.** The proposed investments of \$400 billion in care infrastructure are critical to meeting the growing demands in caring for our rapidly aging population. Specific investments should include development of the workforce, such as those proposed in the SENIOR Act.
- 3. Direct resources to combat COVID-19.** Providers are in critical need of support for the administration of vaccines and boosters, particularly without the PPLTCP reconstituted, due to logistical limitations of facilities and their largely non-ambulatory population. Additional support is also needed for ongoing testing to mitigate the spread of the virus, as previous federal and state support programs cease.

Approximately one in four older Americans who receive some form of assistance for activities of daily living reside in senior living facilities—across assisted living, memory/dementia care, independent living, and Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs). These facilities offer choice, dignity, security, and comfort in the final years of life. But having weathered the COVID-19 pandemic for more than a year and a half with little federal relief, providers simply cannot afford to wait much longer. We need to do everything possible to ensure these providers—*the homes of nearly two million older Americans*—remain viable now and well into the future to meet the rapidly growing care needs of our nation's seniors.

**Mr. President, we are imploring you: please do not leave these seniors and their care providers behind.**

Sincerely,

James Balda  
President & CEO  
Argentum