



November 22, 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. Diana Espinosa  
Acting Administrator  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear President Biden, Secretary Becerra, and Acting Administrator Espinosa:

America's frontline caregivers in senior living have been left behind time and again for equitable relief from COVID-19. They have done everything in their power to keep these most vulnerable Americans safe—from procuring PPE and regular testing to achieving very high vaccination rates among residents and staff. But they haven't had access to equitable relief or support, and we are increasingly concerned about their ability to continue weathering the pandemic. As the administration determines the methodology and prepares to disburse Phase 4 of the Provider Relief Fund, we implore you to prioritize these providers for this much needed relief.

Argentum is the leading national non-profit association representing over 70 percent of senior living facilities, where nearly two million older Americans reside. In fact, approximately one in four older Americans who receive some form of assistance for activities of daily living (ADLs) reside in senior living facilities, which help seniors not only with their ADLs, but holistically with their social determinants of health: nutrition, housing, monitoring medications, and social interaction. They or their families choose these facilities to call home. Unfortunately, the challenges of COVID-19 are placing these homes in jeopardy with half of providers operating at a loss and increasingly fearful of the need to close communities.

We appreciate that the administration has allocated \$17 billion for PRF Phase 4 to account for losses incurred in Q3 and Q4 of 2020 and Q1 of 2021. As a formula is developed to direct relief to providers, we ask that the administration consider the disparity in relief received to date (less than 0.4% of the provider relief fund has been allocated to date to assisted living providers), and the continued financial challenges that these providers are facing in caring for this most at-risk population. Specifically, we are asking that HHS and HRSA recognize the critical care being provided to Medicare beneficiaries in assisted living as part of the discretionary bonus payments intended to help providers serving this population.



The forthcoming relief from the PRF is essential to keeping assisted living facilities open and serving this vulnerable population. The seniors in these communities—*the places they call home*—need to have assurances that help is on the way. Please do everything in your power to target as much of the Phase 4 payments as possible to these frontline providers so they don't get left behind again.

Additionally, we ask for your support of a longer-term solution to this crisis through the creation 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. Every day, 10,000 Americans turn age 65 and nearly 70% of these seniors will require some form of long-term care. We need your help to ensure these facilities will remain a place that America's senior can continue to call home.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

James Balda  
President & CEO  
Argentum