ARGENTUM
EXPANDING SENIOR LIVING

January 19, 2022

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,

As your Administration and Congress consider additional federal measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and specifically the recent surge due to the Omicron variant, we implore you to not leave America's most vulnerable seniors behind again. Through six relief packages and more than $6 trillion in federal spending, senior living residents and their caregivers have not received adequate support to meet the unprecedented challenges they face from this virus. As another legislative package is considered, we urge you to insist on the inclusion of targeted federal financial relief for senior living providers and resources such as tests, vaccine administration, and other measures to mitigate the spread of this virus.

We are asking for your administration to target remaining provider relief to assisted living caregivers. Senior living providers, caring for the single most at-risk population to COVID-19, have been left behind time and again when it's come to federal relief to meet their financial challenges. Despite broad bipartisan support in Congress for targeting the current Phase 4 of the Provider Relief Fund (PRF), these funds were ultimately not targeted and most providers will receive insufficient relief to meet their financial challenges—potentially forcing facilities to close and seniors to lose their homes. Relief to date has simply not been enough to offset the $30 billion that providers have incurred from PPE, testing, cleaning, staffing needs and hero pay, as well as record-low occupancy rates. Further, the relief that's has been allocated is only a small fraction compared to many other providers who are not providing 24/7 care on the frontlines of this crisis.

We are asking for your help to directly distribute a reliable and consistent supply of test kits. Testing supplies have consistently been inadequate to properly track and mitigate the spread of the virus. The past administration recognized the importance of shipping rapid tests directly to assisted living providers and began doing so in September 2020. Unfortunately, while some long-term care providers continue to receive tests, most assisted living providers no longer receive these tests and existing supplies have been depleted. Tests are critically needed, because unfortunately, vaccination has not been enough to fully protect this population, with more than two-thirds of breakthrough hospitalizations (those who are fully vaccinated) occurring in individuals who are age 65 and older. Tests are also needed to ensure adequate staffing and compliance with CDC recommendations on return-to-work, in addition to supporting safe visitation to avoid the detrimental impacts of social and physical isolation.

We are asking for a renewed partnership on vaccine administration through on-site clinics. A previous program was instrumental in the early part of your Administration and helped senior living communities achieve resident vaccination rates of 95.5% and staff vaccination rates of 87.6%. However, as we've learned that vaccine efficacy wanes over time and there would be a need for boosters, this program was not resumed, leaving providers an

their own to administer doses to a largely non-ambulatory population unable to travel to offsite clinics. As additional boosters are needed in the coming months, we strongly encourage the CDC to replicate their earlier highly successful program to ensure our seniors and their caregivers remain protected from this virus and its variants.

We are asking for prioritization of treatments and other necessary supplies. There has been significant promise in the use of some monoclonal antibody therapies to treat individuals infected with the virus, particularly those who are more at-risk including the elderly and those with multiple comorbidities. As our average resident age is 85 and many suffer from multiple ailments that put them at increased risk, we urge the Administration to prioritize these treatments for senior living residents. Additionally, as the Federal Government considers distributing N95 respirators or similar facemasks, we urge that senior living providers are prioritized for these programs.

Mr. President, America's seniors critically need your help. They have been the most vulnerable population to this virus since the pandemic reached our shores, and despite our best efforts to protect them with vaccines and other measures, they remain the single most at-risk group. Yet they and their caregivers have been overlooked for help time and again. As Congress considers the next relief package, we are pleading for your support. Please insist that any legislative efforts fully address the needs of our nation's senior living communities and the nearly two million vulnerable older Americans who call these communities "home."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

James Balda
President & CEO
Argentum