



May 14 Telepresser Remarks
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Here is the real picture of the COVID-19 crisis in Pennsylvania today. Despite being the center of this crisis, providers caring for older adults still need help. The same help they've clamored for since the beginning of March. We have been asking for it for months, and it seems the state finally has started to prioritize long-term care facilities alongside hospitals. And yet.

Too many of our members still are without adequate PPE. We've heard stories of members resorting to using trash bags or rain tarps to create gowns. More help has come from Harrisburg lately, but more is needed, and only a handful of members have received the promised PPE from the federal government.

Our member are still without adequate testing. Despite recent proclamations from the President and our Secretary of Health, there are not enough tests, swabs, and supplies to test within all of our facilities.

We are hopeful that the new commitment to testing all residents and workers will result in meaningful action, and we will work as closely as possible with the Department of Health to make sure that happens. We know one-time testing is not enough. Until rapid testing is available for daily checks for all staff as they enter a community, our most vulnerable citizens remain at unacceptable risk. We can't wait days for results and expect the outcomes we all desire.

In Pennsylvania, we appreciate that the State Senate voted to provide needed funds, and we are hopeful that the House will follow quickly in providing support to all nursing home and long term care providers.

The bottom line is that although the overall situation is better than it was, until swift action is taken we will continue to risk the lives of older adults. This is especially true if we see a second wave of COVID-19.

It is clear that the Federal government must do more. This is a national problem and does not stop at our state's border.

Finally, I am deeply concerned about how reopening states and communities will impact older Americans. We want to get people back to work and back to their lives. However, I am outraged by talk about how lives are expendable. Older adults' lives are not expendable. They are precious, like yours and mine. Let's treat them that way.