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September 9, 2020 Telepresser

Nearly 200,000 people in our country have died of the coronavirus - 200,000! Eighty percent of these deaths have been older adults. And more than 50,000 have been in nursing homes. Millions of Americans are mourning deaths that didn't have to happen.

The federal government has failed older Americans and the people who care for them. Over the last seven months, the abysmal federal response to this unprecedented crisis has cost untold lives.

Many aging services providers are still struggling to secure and pay for testing, PPE, staffing, and other life-saving necessities. Many of our nonprofit members are paying enormous unexpected costs out of their own pockets, or passing the hat among supporters to fill the gaps. As these expenses have mounted, care providers have been confused and sidetracked by a maze of shifting regulations, inconsistent guidance, and disjointed programs.

The cost and confusion are so damaging that many aging services providers are at risk of not being able to continue operations. Just yesterday, I learned of the third of our nursing home members who are closing -- and there's another on the verge of closure. If these providers keep shuttering, what will happen to the vulnerable older adults they serve or those who will need their services in the future?

In recent weeks, the Administration has finally begun taking a few welcome steps to deliver resources to nursing homes. But these are only a small fraction of what is needed to effectively care for nursing home residents -- and virtually ignore other older Americans who need aging services.

After many token gestures and big promises that yielded little, care providers are understandably skeptical as these new initiatives roll out. And it's frustrating to read this week that the Department of Health and Human Services is planning to spend more than \$250 million in taxpayer money on a PR firm this fall when the financial situation is so dire for so many struggling care providers. That funding could cover costs for testing, masks, gloves, sick pay and other desperately needed resources that would save precious lives.

And as we head into flu season, the pandemic is poised to grow even more deadly. Without a comprehensive and clear federal plan to deliver desperately needed testing, PPE, and resources to aging services providers, older adults cannot escape the pandemic's grave and growing danger. The care that our members provide is simply unsustainable without a new federal lifeline.

Older adults are living at ground zero of the worst pandemic in a century. The U.S. has never seen a crisis of this magnitude. Today we're releasing a situation report on what nursing homes and other aging services providers are facing today. You'll see that current conditions call for nothing less than extraordinary measures and unprecedented relief.

We are counting on Congress to come through for older adults. The House acted on a new relief bill in May. We have been anxiously waiting for the Senate to take action. A new version of this summer's "skinny bill"--which does not provide desperately needed resources for older

adults--could be voted on as soon as this week. As they reconvene, we have one message for every Member of Congress: No COVID-19 relief bill should pass without historic levels of support and resources specifically targeted to aging services providers caring for older Americans.

Today I'm here along with my colleagues from around the country to share the growing hardships providers are facing.