



Inadequate Support Despite Repeated Calls for Federal Leadership, Coordination and Resources

A Timeline of COVID's Devastating Impact on Older Americans

January 2020

January 21: [First confirmed COVID-19 case](#) in the United States.

January 29: President's Coronavirus Task Force established.

January 30: W.H.O. declares a [global health emergency](#).

February

February 26: Vice President Pence takes over from HHS Secretary Azar as Coronavirus Task Force Chair.

February 29: The [first confirmed U.S. COVID-19 death](#) in the United States.

March

March 4: LeadingAge [welcomes](#) CMS actions to prioritize older adults while calling on policymakers to address their needs.

March 6: LeadingAge [requests that Vice President Pence](#), as Chair of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, address the needs of older adults living in HUD-subsidized housing and insist that HUD provide guidance to housing providers.

March 13: President Trump declares a national emergency, CMS issues guidance for infection control and prevention of COVID-19 in America's nursing homes, including new restrictions on nearly all visitors (including loved ones, as well as most ombudsmen and nursing home inspectors). LeadingAge urges Congress to take [decisive action](#) to aid older adults and aging services providers.

March 15: CDC advised no gatherings of [50 or more people](#).

March 17: [LeadingAge warns Congress](#) of possible staffing issues related to COVID-19 response; asks for increased support for caregivers as well as prioritization for critical supplies.

March 26: The United States confirms more than 1,000 COVID deaths.

March 27: CARES Act is signed into law; [includes access](#) to some disaster relief fund and business loan provisions, suspends sequestration; increase in FMAP and more

April

Some states and localities begin to close schools and other public facilities.

April 3: LeadingAge [warns](#) the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that aging services providers can not access sufficient supplies of PPE and other resources needed to protect staff and ensure the well-being of residents.

April 4: LeadingAge [urges](#) FEMA and DHS to ensure that protective equipment also be sent to hospices, home health agencies and affordable housing communities.

April 29: LeadingAge [asks](#) Vice President Pence, FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that all aging services providers receive meaningful amounts of PPE and testing.

April 30: LeadingAge president and CEO Katie Smith Sloan attends White House event where President Trump claimed that ‘We’re taking very special care of our nursing homes and our seniors. LeadingAge [reacts](#) saying that the time for talk was past, and calling for meaningful amounts of PPE, effective testing and a comprehensive approach to supporting older adults and the workers who care for them. “Today’s announcements fell far short of what’s needed to protect the most vulnerable Americans from the coronavirus.”

May

May 1: LeadingAge [implores HHS Secretary Alex Azar to prioritize](#) distribution of a significant portion of Provider Relief Funds for aging service providers.

May 5: LeadingAge [calls on](#) Congress to allocate \$100 billion in its next relief package to cover COVID-19 aging services needs.

May 7: As some states begin to reopen, LeadingAge unveils a [five-point action plan](#) demanding urgently needed protections for older adults and the people who care for them.

May 14: LeadingAge [welcomes](#) House passage of HEROES Act noting that it takes several steps toward addressing key needs of aging services providers across the continuum of care including providing appreciation pay for frontline workers.

May 18: LeadingAge notes that “The guidance from [CMS is not grounded in these everyday realities of our members](#). We need a plan for testing. We need access to adequate testing supplies and PPE. Nursing homes need help from federal or state governments to cover these necessary costs. Today’s guidance delivers none of that.”

May 21: LeadingAge asks Vice President Pence to [stop posing for photo ops](#) with PPE distributions until FEMA distributions were truly “demonstrative of a clear and comprehensive national effort to deliver ample PPE to the nursing homes who need them.”

May 22: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announces nearly \$4.9 billion in additional relief funds for skilled nursing facilities.

May 27: COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. pass [100,000](#).

May 28: LeadingAge [urges](#) Congressional leaders to focus additional attention and resources on enabling nursing homes to have access and funds to conduct rapid COVID-19 testing on staff who could be exposed to the virus in the community and at work and on residents.

June

June 7: LeadingAge launches the [Act for Older Adults](#) campaign, calling on Congress to provide real relief for older Americans and the people who care for them.

June 11: LeadingAge [spreads the word](#) that significant amounts of the PPE sent by FEMA to care providers are unusable and defective.

June 16: The Administration pushes for more state and local communities to reopen as Vice President Pence, the Chair of the Coronavirus Task Force publishes an op-ed, [There Isn't a Coronavirus 'Second Wave.'](#)

June 19: The United States reports more than [30,000](#) new infections, its highest since May 1.

June 24: On LeadingAge’s [National Day of Action](#), thousands of aging service providers and other Americans demand that Congress provide real relief for older Americans and care workers.

July

July 1: LeadingAge calls for an [overhaul of federal COVID leadership](#) in light of a spike in cases and the federal government’s failures in providing testing and PPE.

July 2: LeadingAge [asks](#) Vice President Pence, who is in charge of the Coronavirus Task Force, to help cut red tape and bring a war time posture to the fight, calling for focused federal leadership to provide sufficient tests, supplies and resources for care providers.

July 10: LeadingAge [calls on](#) President Trump to create a coordinated federal plan to deal with the worst health care crisis as he traveled to Florida for a series of events.

July 14: The Department of Health and Human Services [announces](#) it will begin sending one rapid-results antigen testing machine and an initial set of supplies to nursing homes in hotspots across the country to give “nursing homes the ability to swiftly identify residents that need to be isolated and mitigate the spread of the virus.” Nursing homes were told they would need to foot the cost and handle the purchase of additional supplies needed for weekly testing (in some cases locally mandated).

July 20: LeadingAge asks Vice President Pence to invoke the [Defense Production Act](#) to improve availability of PPE and testing equipment. LeadingAge and LeadingAge Florida [release a report](#) showing a looming fiscal cliff for aging service providers.

July 28: LeadingAge and ten associations of faith-based and mission-driven aging and disability service providers [send a letter to Congress and the Administration](#) asking for crucial resources.

July 29: LeadingAge and nonprofit aging services leaders hold a press conference on the [HEALS Act’s shortcomings](#), pointing out that it does not address PPE, testing or staffing needs at nursing homes where 80% of the deaths were occurring.

August

August 5: LeadingAge and five nonprofit organizations and associations focused on aging [send a letter](#) to Congress and the Trump Administration, asking for comprehensive relief measures to safeguard older adults and care workers.

August 7: HHS announces distribution of \$5 billion: \$2.5 billion to support increased testing, staffing, and PPE needs, with the remainder linked to an evaluation of nursing home performance in minimizing COVID spread and COVID-related fatalities among its residents.

August 14: The Senate adjourns for summer recess, going home without even debating HEALS Act proposals offered in July--even as COVID-19 cases are spiking. LeadingAge and local leaders [implore Congress to get back to work](#).

August 25: LeadingAge [releases a survey](#) of members showing confusion and concerns about the antigen test machines sent to nursing homes in hotspots.

September

September 9: LeadingAge releases a [situation report](#) on aging services providers’ immediate needs for funding for rapid-response testing, PPE, and staffing.

September 22: The U.S. death toll surpasses [200,000](#).

October

October 6: LeadingAge [responds to reports](#) that Congressional COVID-19 relief negotiations ended, saying “It is reckless, callous and cruel to walk away from older Americans as the pandemic worsens.”

October 29: LeadingAge releases [a new situation report](#) on the escalating impact of COVID-19 on aging services providers, calling for protecting peoples’ lives over politics.

November

November 8: [10 million](#) Americans are infected.

November 11: LeadingAge [releases a survey](#) showing that its members need help with accessing consistent supplies for tests, along with funding to administer tests.

November 18: As the U.S. COVID-19 death toll hits [250,000](#), LeadingAge [releases a survey](#) showing the pandemic’s outsized impact on aging service providers.

November 23: LeadingAge and state affiliates [make a pre-Thanksgiving plea](#), asking American people and policymakers for help protecting the lives of older Americans.

November 25: Over 100,000 people who have died of COVID-19 have been in long-term facilities.

December

December 2: Reports show more than [209,000 COVID-19 deaths](#) were among people 65+.

December 8: LeadingAge [recommends](#) policy proposals for the first 30 days, 100 days, and first year of the new administration.

December 14: The U.S. death toll [surpasses](#) 300,000. Initial vaccine distribution begins.

December 15: LeadingAge [urges Congress](#) to support care providers in any COVID relief legislation.

December 20: LeadingAge [explains](#) how the Congressional relief package falls short in providing relief for older Americans.

December 21: Congress passes [The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#), adding funds to the Paycheck Protection Program, monies to support vaccine distribution and administration, an extension of the Medicare sequestration and more.

January 2021

January 15: LeadingAge [releases](#) a survey on members' vaccine education efforts, calling for stepped-up public education efforts.

January 29: LeadingAge [launches](#) its 100 Days of Advocacy to urge Congress to finally pass relief for which LeadingAge has been pleading for nearly a year.

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