

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

LeadingAge and our partners the Visiting Nurses Associations of America and ElevatingHOME, on behalf of our more than 5000 non-profit members who provide housing, health care and personal assistance to older persons and persons with disabilities, request that Congress consider the following actions in any additional legislation addressing the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency. We very much appreciate the consideration given to many of the items we identified in our previous requests.

For the people we represent – nonprofit aging services – this crisis is not over. There remains significant need for legislative and financial support to address the very real immediate needs of, and the long-term impact of the pandemic on, aging services providers, their employees, and the older people they serve.

On [May 5](#), [June 15](#), [August 11](#), LeadingAge submitted recommendations for additional legislative measures and on September 15 we sent you our [Pandemic Situation Report](#) on aging services providers' immediate needs. This letter addresses the provisions in the Heroes Act, HR 6800, that we urge you to include in any newly proposed COVID-19 relief legislation that is under consideration, as well as a limited number of additional provisions that are critical to providing essential services to older persons and LeadingAge and VNAA/ElevatingHOME members.

Key provisions in HR 6800 to include in any additional legislation:

1. Require the Administration to adopt meaningful and consistent national strategies for the acquisition, distribution, and financing of testing, **and for the equitable distribution of safe, effective vaccines.**
 - a. **Sec. 30511, et seq..** We support the supply chain improvements identified in Title V, Sub A, including creating a Medical Supplies Response Coordinator, as the need for PPE will continue well into the next year.
 - b. **Sec. 30541, et seq.:** We strongly support the provisions in Title V, Sub C, especially the creation of a national testing strategy and urge that any legislation include identifying aging services providers and older Americans as priorities in development of a testing strategy, payment and implementation.
2. **Div. A, Title VI** Provide additional allocation of \$100 Billion to the Provider Relief Fund. We request that language be included that specifically prioritizes all aging services providers – including nursing homes, assisted living, hospice, home health, adult day services centers, PACE organizations, and continuing care retirement communities –to access these funds to pay for e.g., personal protective equipment needed so long as the public health emergency continues, lost income from reduced occupancy, and other needs.

3. **Div. A, Title VI:** Provide a separate allocation of no less than \$75 Billion for testing. We request that residents and staff of aging services be specifically identified as priorities to receive regular and consistent testing, including the ability to use this funding to replace staff who must quarantine or who become ill.
4. **Title IX, Sec. 110207 et seq:** Adopt in full the provisions funding affordable senior housing, including Project Based Rental Assistance (\$750 million) and for the Section 202 Housing for the Elderly program (\$500 million), including \$300 million for Service Coordinators, to address the additional costs associated with COVID-19, including PPE for staff, engaging service coordinators for all HUD senior housing.
5. **Sec. 90004, et seq:** Expand and modify the Paycheck Protection Program by making loans available to nonprofits of all sizes to participate, allowing second-draw loans for existing borrowers who experienced significant revenue losses and/or increased outlays specific to fighting COVID-19 (e.g., PPE, staffing and testing costs borne by aging services providers) and simplifying loan forgiveness processes for PPP borrowers.
6. **Sec. 110604:** Mandate that the Fed include nonprofits in the Main Street Lending Program.
7. **Titles III, VIII:** Expand the availability of broadband and telecommunications services for individuals and health care providers.
8. **Sec. 170001, et seq.** Adopt the Heroes Fund, pandemic “premium pay” for essential workers, which includes direct care workers who play a critical role in aging services, recognizing that they are putting their lives on the line:
9. **Sec. 101001:** Provide funds to essential workers (including direct care and other aging services workers) to pay for child care; this is critical especially as schools and child care centers remain closed and children are attending classes remotely.
10. **Sec. 30101, 30103:** Increase the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) for Medicaid by a total of 14 points and for Medicaid home and community-based services (including waiver/state plan services and PACE) by an additional 10 points, and enact the additional provisions in those sections.
11. **Sec. 30208, 30209:** Provide specific funding for nursing homes to ensure that nursing homes have the resources to care for residents with COVID appropriately and safely.
12. **Sec. 191204:** Temporarily ease certain immigration-related restrictions to supplement critical healthcare workers. During the PHE we support initiatives that expedite processing of applications of physicians and other critical healthcare workers seeking employment to provide healthcare and engage in the fight against COVID-19. We also support the establishment of emergency procedures to provide employment authorizations for all healthcare occupations that are essential to a COVID-19 response.

Additional Requests:

Housing: We urge you to include the provision in **H.R. 6873, Sec. 2(a)(2)**, that allocates \$50,000,000 for installation of wireless internet and service fees in common areas and apartments of HUD affordable senior housing so residents can access telehealth, protect themselves from social isolation, and partake in community programming..



Telehealth: Make telehealth flexibilities, currently permitted via the Coronavirus Preparedness and Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2020, the CARES Act, and 1135 waivers, permanent and allow home health telehealth services to be reimbursed.

Hospice: Include the provisions in **H.R. 8322** that allow hospices more flexibility in the provision of respite care during the public health emergency.

Thank you for your leadership, which is greatly needed now more than ever to ensure that the most vulnerable people are not abandoned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO LeadingAge
Acting President and CEO, VNAA/Elevating Home