



November 10, 2020

David Kessler
Vivek H. Murthy
Marcella Nunez-Smith
Co-Chairs
Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board
Biden-Harris Transition
Washington, DC

Co-Chairs Kessler, Murthy, and Nunez-Smith:

We commend the Biden-Harris Transition team on establishing the Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board.

LeadingAge represents more than 5,000 aging-focused organizations. Our members comprise the full continuum of aging services providers, including skilled nursing, assisted living, life plan, affordable senior housing, hospice, adult day, and home- and community-based services.

One of President-elect Biden's goals for the Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board is to protect at-risk populations.

With more than 80% of COVID-19 deaths among those 65+, no population is more at-risk than older adults. In addition to older adults served in mainstream settings, older adults and the providers who serve them in congregate settings like nursing homes, assisted living, affordable senior housing, hospice, adult day, and other home- and community-based settings are eager for greater, more focused attention. To assure a robust federal response to the coronavirus, we urge the Advisory Board to include special attention on these congregate settings in its work. Indeed, LeadingAge believes any federal response to COVID-19 must include requisite attention to the full continuum of aging services providers.

The Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board includes a stunning depth of scientists and public health experts. LeadingAge believes the Advisory Board's work could be further enhanced by including geriatricians and experts in aging services, whose expertise on aging could inform understanding of how older adults are uniquely impacted by COVID-19, and by including mental health experts, as the toll COVID-19 is taking on the mental health of older adults and aging service providers has increased at a devastating speed.

LeadingAge's COVID-19 priorities have mirrored those of the Biden-Harris Transition: testing, PPE, and evidence-based guidance. LeadingAge supports immediate access to ample and appropriate PPE for all providers who serve older people; a comprehensive federal testing program for anyone who needs testing, including older adults and the providers who serve them; assurance that states will consider the health and safety of older people as they reopen; recognition for the heroic frontline workers who are risking their own lives serving older people during this crisis; a vaccine distribution plan that recognizes the varied settings older adults call home; and, funding and support for aging services providers across

the continuum of care, including for nursing homes, assisted living, affordable housing, hospice, or wherever older adults live.

We will continue our advocacy for Congress to pass a broad COVID-19 relief package as quickly as possible this calendar year. A follow-up to the March 2020 CARES Act is long overdue. We look forward to working with you on subsequent relief packages.

LeadingAge members are the front-line providers of health care, affordable housing, and other long term care services and supports programs to millions of older adults every day. LeadingAge is here to help you carry out the Advisory Board's most worthy of goals: a robust federal response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO
LeadingAge