

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

April 24, 2020

Seema Verma  
Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma,

We write today to express our strong support for ensuring that nursing homes and other long-term care facilities receive the resources they need to effectively respond to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and prevent outbreaks in their facilities. As you know, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act [P.L. 116–136] included \$200 million for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to assist nursing homes with infection control and support states' efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes. However, CMS has not yet released any of these funds. Given the significant challenges facing these facilities during this pandemic, we strongly urge you to disburse this funding as expeditiously as possible.

Since the COVID-19 crisis began, we have seen the devastating results when an outbreak occurs in a nursing home or other long-term care facility. Unfortunately, Maryland facilities have not been spared. Out of Maryland's 227 long-term care facilities, more than 150 of those facilities had COVID-19 cases as of April 20. Earlier this month, a 200-bed facility in Northwest Baltimore announced that it had 170 positive COVID-19 cases among residents and staff, making it one of the largest long-term care facility outbreaks in the country. This follows a large outbreak at a Carroll County, Maryland nursing home where nearly 30 residents have died and more than 120 residents and staff tested positive.

It is critical that we protect residents and staff at long-term care facilities. We know how vulnerable older Americans and individuals with underlying health conditions are to COVID-19 and how high the risk of spread is once the virus enters one of these facilities. It is imperative that nursing homes and other long-term care facilities have the resources they need in order to prevent more of these devastating outbreaks. We believe that the disbursement of these CARES Act funds is an important first step in bolstering their ability to prepare and respond to COVID-19.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this issue. We look forward to working with you to support these facilities and protect their residents and staff.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin

---

Chris Van Hollen  
U.S. Senator

---

Benjamin L. Cardin  
U.S. Senator

/s/ Steny H. Hoyer

---

Steny H. Hoyer  
Member of Congress

/s/ John P. Sarbanes

---

John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown

---

Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone

---

David Trone  
Member of Congress

/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger

---

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress

/s/ Andy Harris, M.D.

---

Andy Harris, M.D.  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin

---

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress