

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

As Members of the New York Congressional Delegation who represent the state most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to prioritize nursing homes<sup>1</sup> in future allocations of the *CARES Act* emergency funding for hospitals and health care providers.<sup>2</sup>

While policies for future distributions are still being developed, we understand that funding would be directed to COVID-19 “hot spots”<sup>3</sup> and provider types not addressed in the initial delivery from the \$100 billion health care provider relief fund.<sup>4</sup> We demand that nursing homes, which were not addressed in the initial distribution, receive their fair share to combat the lethal threat of COVID-19.

According to data provided by the New York State Department of Health, at least 2,000 nursing homes residents across New York State have now died from COVID-19.<sup>5</sup> In the State of New York, nursing home deaths may continue to climb because of chronic staffing shortages that have exacerbated due to the COVID-19 crisis, a shortage of protective supplies and a continued lack of available testing.<sup>6</sup>

Nursing Home providers face many challenges as they work diligently to address the serious public health risk posed by COVID-19. The staff and residents in nursing homes require

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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S. Code § 1396r.

<sup>2</sup> P.L. 116-136

<sup>3</sup> Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. *Hot Spot Detection*. Accessed on April 15, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/population-health-methods/hot-spot-detection>

<sup>4</sup> P.L. 116-136

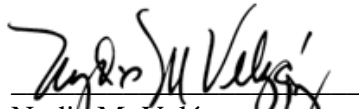
<sup>5</sup> New York State Department of Health. COVID-19 Nursing Home Fatalities. Accessed on April 15, 2020. Retrieved from: [https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/diseases/covid-19/fatalities\\_nursing\\_home\\_acf.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/diseases/covid-19/fatalities_nursing_home_acf.pdf)

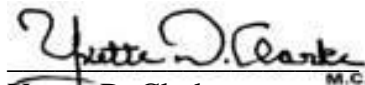
<sup>6</sup> Waller, Derick. ABC 7 New York. Coronavirus News: Nursing homes hard hit by COVID-19. Accessed on April 15, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://abc7ny.com/coronavirus-nursing-homes-nj-new-jersey-update/6101923/>

immediate support to get them through this crisis. They are in urgent need of staff, essential supplies, and resources to retain health care workers. Therefore, we write to request that you prioritize funding for nursing homes, especially those in COVID-19 “hot spots” to meet the needs of these long-term care facilities. Prioritizing nursing homes funding is critical to protecting the elderly and the most vulnerable throughout the country from COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

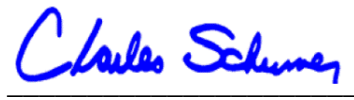
Sincerely,


  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

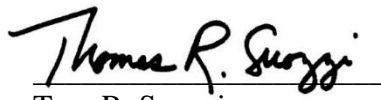
  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

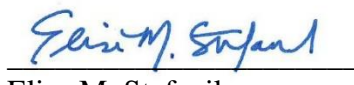
  
Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress

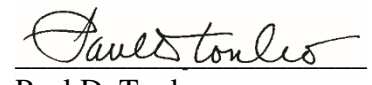
  
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

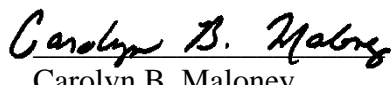
  
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

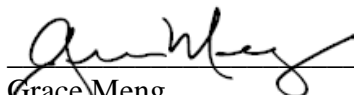
  
José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

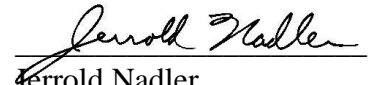
  
Tom R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

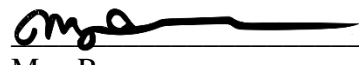
  
Elise M. Stefanik  
Member of Congress

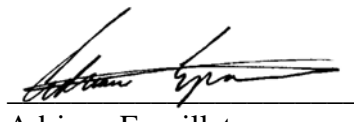
  
Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress


  
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

  
Grace Meng  
Member of Congress


  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

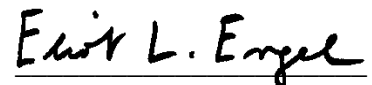
  
Max Rose  
Member of Congress

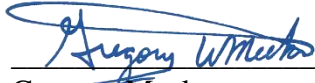
  
Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

  
Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress


  
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

  
Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

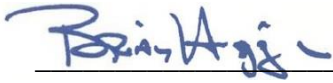
  
Eliot Engel  
Member of Congress



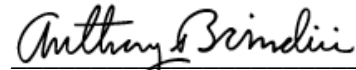
Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress



Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress




Anthony Brindisi  
Member of Congress



Antonio Delgado  
Member of Congress



Tom Reed  
Member of Congress



Lee Zeldin  
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