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 in future allocations of the CARES Act emergency funding for hospitals and health care providers. While policies for future distributions are still being developed, we understand that funding would be directed to COVID-19 “hot spots” and provider types not addressed in the initial delivery from the $100 billion health care provider relief fund. 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. 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.

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

---

1 42 U.S. Code § 1396r.  
2 P.L. 116-136  
4 P.L. 116-136  
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

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Max Rose
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

Fareed Nadler
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

Tom R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress

Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress

Tom R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

Fareed Nadler
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress

Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress

Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress

Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Fareed Nadler
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
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
Member of Congress