



Advancing quality. Improving lives.



April 8, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

Thank you for all that you and your administration have done for the residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

To put it simply: the residents most susceptible to this virus inhabit our nursing homes. And now, we're seeing hard-working staff on the frontlines test positive for COVID-19 as well.

The number of positive cases is multiplying in facilities across the state. There is little to no personal protective equipment (PPE) available. Staff are leaving due to illness or low wages. **Providers need help.**

There are nearly 700 nursing homes in Pennsylvania. Tens of thousands of residents and staff in those homes are relying on you, your administration, and members of the legislature for support. This is truly the defining moment for our long-term care sector.

Providers, workers, and residents need two things from you and your administration as soon as possible:

#### **Emergency Funding**

On March 18, the federal government provided an emergency 6.2% increase in its Medicaid matching rate for every state, which equals approximately \$1.5 billion for Pennsylvania. Right now, providers should be fully focused on providing quality care and stopping the spread of COVID-19 in their facilities. But due to escalating funding challenges caused by this crisis, they are having to focus instead on filling caregiver shifts and keeping their doors open. As previously requested in a letter alongside SEIU Healthcare, District 1199C, AFSCME, AFL-CIO and UFCW 1776KS, emergency funding from the 6.2% increase should be allocated directly to nursing home providers and workers with a 3% increase in Medicaid rates and a minimum allocation of \$290 million to be used to ensure adequate staffing, PPE, and supplies for a duration of 120 days.

#### **Civil Immunity**

COVID-19 has altered the delivery of healthcare services in Pennsylvania, based on guidance and recommendations from CMS, the CDC, and our Department of Health. Although necessary, these new measures have raised concern about the potential liability of our providers and staff who are caring for their residents.

We are asking you to stand up for providers and workers, as governors in our neighboring states, including New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut have already done, and issue an executive order providing civil immunity to health care professionals. Staff are putting themselves at risk every single day. They should not have to worry about the threat of lawsuits as they care for their residents.

On behalf of all long-term care providers in Pennsylvania, thank you for your consideration.

Zachary Shamberg  
President & CEO  
Pennsylvania Health Care Association

Adam Marles  
President & CEO  
LeadingAge PA