

Increase in COVID-19 Cases

The rise and spread of the novel coronavirus throughout the United States has been unprecedented for both skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities. COVID-19 is currently impacting thousands of skilled nursing and assisted living communities across the US and is continuing to spread rapidly across the country in areas previously less affected. Although nationally the numbers are slowly beginning to trend downward, there are now new and emerging regions throughout the country where facilities are seeing a spike in infections and deaths. As a result, long term care providers continue to face immediate and dire circumstances.

New Haven County in Connecticut and Harris County in Texas are two examples of counties that are currently dealing with a spike in cases. It is estimated that facilities with COVID-19 are spending almost twice as much as facilities without COVID-19. It is imperative that we continue to invest in affected facilities to stop the spread across more communities and address the unknown risks ahead.

To support providers across the country as they battle the spread of COVID-19 and keep the most vulnerable safe, we ask that HHS provide an additional round of funding for facilities that have served patients with the virus. This funding request is consistent with the per case “hot-spot” tranche that hospitals received. We recommend \$25,000 per infected resident, retroactive to the start of the pandemic, to every skilled nursing provider that will deal with COVID-19 in their facilities in 2020. This is one-third of the per case amount that HHS provided for hospitals but would provide us the resources we need to fight the virus.

Once COVID-19 enters a long-term care facility, it is challenging to contain without proper staff and equipment. Our members and their caregivers are truly at ground zero of this pandemic and resources must specifically be deployed in facilities that have patients impacted by the virus. Assisting these providers is a matter of life and death for the individuals they care for. There are multiple heroic examples of innovation, selflessness and caring occurring all over the country. Our caregivers, though weary, remain committed to defeating this scourge.

Skilled nursing facilities have already made unprecedented investments in response to this crisis. The vast majority of their expenses are directly tied to additional staffing and supplies to protect our staff and vulnerable patients from exposure to the virus and to contain the virus if it is introduced into a building. It is our utmost priority to provide safety and protection for our residents, patients and healthcare workers. We will continue to work with Congress and the White House to continue to combat COVID-19 in our communities.