

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 28, 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
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

We write in support of the providers of high quality, long-term supports and services to people with disabilities across the country and to urge you to ensure these providers receive significant financial relief from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund during the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, consistent with an emergency estimate advanced by the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, we request that \$8.3 billion from the recently passed *CARES Act* and PPP and *Health Care Enhancement Act* be urgently allocated to providers of Medicaid Home and Community Based Services and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities.

Already facing a workforce shortage and high staff turnover before the pandemic, these providers are at risk of collapse without federal support. A recent survey of 698 community providers serving individuals with disabilities conducted by the American Network of Community Options and Resources illustrates how critical the situation is for these providers. The majority of respondents reported having to shut down services, with closed services accounting for 32% of annual revenue, on average. At the same time, operating costs are up, and respondents reported additional expenditures related to acquiring personal protective equipment (PPE) and staff training, onboarding, and overtime. Half of respondents only have enough cash to stay in business for one month.

Direct Support Professionals struggle to acquire equipment of every kind, including masks, face shields, gloves, and gowns. Further, assisting people with disabilities with the activities of daily living – dressing, bathing, toileting – often makes it impossible for staff to social distance.

Millions of Americans with disabilities rely on Medicaid-funded supports and services to live independent, healthy, and meaningful lives - and during this pandemic, these programs are essential to their very survival, keeping them safe at home during social isolation and funding lifeline supports. As

we work to further address this issue in supplemental legislation, it is critical that we provide relief to the organizations and workers that serve these individuals and ensure that Medicaid disability supports continue to operate during this pandemic and long after we defeat it. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
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Ron Estes
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
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TJ Cox
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Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
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Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Jim Hagedorn
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Peter T. King
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Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
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James R. Langevin
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Ted Deutch
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French Hill
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James P. McGovern
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Joe Neguse
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Darren Soto
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David Trone
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Max Rose
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Juan Vargas
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Dina Titus
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Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress