



March 24, 2020

The Honorable Brian Kemp

Dear Governor Kemp,

LeadingAge Georgia is the association for not-for-profit and other mission-based housing and service providers for older adults. Sixty-five percent of our members are faith-based including Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc. On behalf of our members, we thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. We greatly value your leadership and efforts to date.

Our members provide housing to older adults in various settings including independent living, affordable HUD communities, personal care homes, assisted living homes and nursing homes. Our service providers provide in-home care, home-health and hospice services for older adults.

While our members are mission-driven and dedicated to serving older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, they are dangerously low on personal protective equipment (PPE). The residents and staff in these settings are at risk due to the inadequate access to PPE. **We ask that you add congregate settings for older adults – nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living homes and in-home care providers and hospice providers to the priority list for receiving PPE. I am told the Governor of Florida has made PPE available to LeadingAge Florida member communities serving older adults.**

Hospitals are releasing individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 without testing and **we ask that you make tests readily available that can make results available in a timely manner.** We understand that there are now tests that can have results within forty-five minutes. Timely test results would allow our members to manage risk of endangering residents and staff.

Our members are also having difficulty finding locations open for finger-print background checks. **We ask that you waive the requirement for fingerprint background checks in long-term care settings until the COVID-19 pandemic is over.** Long-term care settings and in-home providers could still utilize the Gchex system to do background checks in Georgia.

Finally, while our members have excellent track records for caring for residents and clients during flu seasons, COVID-19 appears to be more contagious putting both staff and other residents at risk. We ask that you consider the Resolution of The Society for Post-Acute and Long-term Care Medicine (formerly AMDA). They are the medical directors for long-term care settings. They recommend that local/state/federal governments develop and deploy alternative care settings for those who have suffered from COVID-19 infection and ensure that post-acute and long-term care patients are not placed at undue risk of infection (See attached Resolution). **We ask that you do as suggested by The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine and deploy alternative care settings so as to protect residents and staff without COVID-19.**

Best,

Ginny Helms

Ginny Helms
President