August 12, 2020

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| The Honorable Nancy PelosiSpeaker U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515  | The Honorable Mitch McConnell Majority LeaderU.S. SenateWashington, DC 20510  |
| The Honorable Kevin McCarthy Minority LeaderU.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515  | The Honorable Charles Schumer Minority LeaderU.S. SenateWashington, DC 20510  |

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

As organizations dedicated to advocating for the needs of people with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and aging adults, we write to you to express our concern about the future of a population that is highly vulnerable to COVID-19. We look to your leadership to ensure this important group of Americans is safeguarded from the threat of losing access to critical Medicaid-funded care.

People with disabilities, people with chronic health conditions, and aging adults often rely on home and community-based services (HCBS) to live. But access to this care is in jeopardy unless the Senate supports a increases to the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) rate, including that which is dedicated to HCBS providers, as proposed in the bill passed by the House of Representatives.

The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated. HCBS providers give people with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and aging adults a safe community to lead independent lives. Frontline caregivers offer life-sustaining services and support for these individuals to help ensure they remain safe and healthy.

The importance of dedicated funding for this type of specialized care is even more necessary during a global pandemic, when external threats are heightened. People with complex medical needs are at an increased risk if exposed to COVID-19. Without sustained access to caregivers, they will have few places to turn. The House bill recognizes this and addresses the problem directly.

To ensure Americans with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and aging adults who require personalized care from trained caregivers remain stable, increased FMAP rates, including for HCBS specifically, must be included in the COVID-19 relief legislation currently being negotiated. These funds are critical to preserving the system of specialized care on which so many vulnerable Americans rely. The House version of this bill accomplishes this important goal. We urge you to adopt this approach and include the strongest protections possible against state-level rate cuts that threaten the very system and people we need to protect.

We are grateful for the leadership this Congress has shown to protect populations most vulnerable from this deadly virus. We urge you to continue your good work and ensure stability for people with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and aging adults by increasing FMAP rates, including for HCBS specifically. We hope this is an area where the House, Senate, and White House can reach agreement.

Sincerely,