

# JUST THE FACTS: EXPERTS AGREE: PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR MUST DO MORE TO HELP LONG TERM CARE

*LACK OF PRIORITIZATION FOR CRITICAL FUNDING AND RESOURCES HAS LED TO TRAGIC DEATHS IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES THAT COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED.*

## LONG TERM FACILITIES WERE FORGOTTEN

**Dr. David Grabowski, professor of health care policy, Harvard Medical School:** "I think we really dropped the ball here ... We have not done right by older adults who are living in nursing homes and those that care for them."<sup>1</sup>

"Unlike those in Hong Kong, American nursing homes didn't have months of masks stocked up. When the virus hit, they were tearing through their supplies at hundreds of times the rate they normally would. Hospitals, not nursing homes, were seen as the priority destination for the country's precious reserves of masks. 'We somehow expect individual nursing-home operators to compete against large hospitals and states in trying to get that equipment,' [Dr. Tamara] Konetzka said."<sup>1</sup>

**Mark Goldfeder, attorney and law professor:** "Senior living communities did not cause the coronavirus crisis, but they are bearing the brunt of it. The numbers continue to spike across the country and nearly half of COVID-19 related deaths have been linked to elder care facilities."<sup>2</sup>

## CRITICAL RESOURCES ARE STILL NEEDED

**Mark Parkinson, president and CEO, American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living:** "The PPE shortage is still not over."<sup>1</sup>

"[M]uch of the money allocated for nursing homes in the coronavirus relief bill hasn't been distributed yet, according to a letter sent by two members of Congress in June. And Parkinson said even that amount – \$200 million – pales in comparison with what nursing homes actually need."<sup>1</sup>

"Melinda Haschak, a licensed practical nurse in Connecticut, testified before the House Ways and Means Committee in late June that workers at her home still lack protective equipment."<sup>1</sup>

## LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES MUST GET THE HELP THEY NEED

"Meanwhile, Konetzka said that truly stopping outbreaks in nursing homes requires 'testing at the right time with rapid results, such that people can be separated in time before the virus spreads through the facility.'"<sup>1</sup>

"Parkinson pointed out that beyond simply mandating the tests, states need to pay for them, because many homes can't afford to."<sup>1</sup>

**Mark Goldfeder, attorney and law professor:**

"[N]ursing homes need continued priority access to personal protection equipment and increased access to quicker testing and processing."<sup>2</sup>

"[M]ore funding from the Provider Relief Fund should be made available to the eldercare community ... There is still \$65 billion available and residents desperately need the additional support. Congress should also consider allocating more money to the relief fund in the next phase of stimulus legislation. Nothing is more important for nursing home residents' safety than ensuring the financial stability and viability of these frontline facilities, many of which may go bankrupt if they do not receive help."<sup>2</sup>

"[W]e need to take heed of this moment and restructure our health care system so that, in the words of Harvard's Dr. David Grabowski, who testified at the hearing, Medicaid will 'begin to pay a higher rate commensurate with the costs of delivering high-quality long-term care to frail older adults.'"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Olga Khazan, "The U.S. Is Repeating Its Deadliest Pandemic Mistake," [The Atlantic](#), 7/6/20

<sup>2</sup>Mark Goldfeder, "Coronavirus Nursing Home Crisis – 6 Things We Must Do Now To Protect Seniors," [Fox News](#), 7/6/20