

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 12, 2020

The Honorable Mary C. Mayhew, Secretary  
Agency for Health Care Administration  
State of Florida  
2727 Mahan Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Dear Secretary Mayhew,

We write to you, as stewards of federal Medicare and Medicaid funds, regarding our grave concerns about the status of nursing home residents and staff in Florida during the coronavirus pandemic. Specifically, we have heard from frontline caregivers who have communicated to us that they lack adequate personal protective equipment and testing supplies.

As you know, the Agency for Health Care Administration is charged with critical oversight of Florida's long-term care facilities, and we acknowledge the challenges associated with this task. According to your agency, new infections among long-term care facilities residents have surged by 153 percent, with 2,868 new cases between June 30 and July 20. Cases among staff have risen by 126 percent, with 3,784 new cases in that same time period. More telling is that these numbers have spiked in spite of a statewide ban on visitors to these facilities – meaning that new infections can be directly attributed to staff and vendors.

Public health experts agree that the best course of action to protect those who live and work in long-term care facilities is two-pronged: adequate personal protective equipment and regular, rapid, and repeated testing.

While the State requires that long-term staff be tested every two weeks, with the results available within 72 hours, Centers for Disease Control guidance recommends that staff be tested every week, with the results available within 48 hours. Additionally, caregivers have reported to us that they have been required to reuse masks and gowns repeatedly over the course of several days and in some cases three or more weeks. Although it is widely known that PPE was in short supply at the beginning of the outbreak several months ago, it is disturbing to hear that these problems persist.

Prohibiting visitors goes a long way towards making sure the residents at these facilities avoid infection. But without adequate protections for staff, the security that comes from sacrificing contact with family and loved ones will be negated. The dedicated workers at these facilities put themselves at risk in order to care for our loved ones in long-term care facilities, and they are

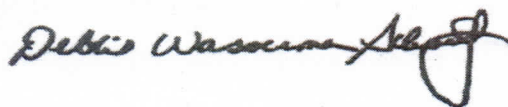
sounding the alarm. We encourage AHCA to make a through accounting of the availability of PPE at all long-term care facilities in the state and release their findings to the public.

As public servants, we should all do our part to protect and support seniors and the workers who have stood by them during this health crisis. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

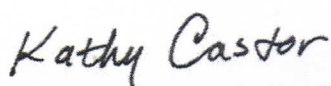
Sincerely,



Charlie Crist  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



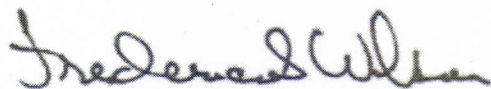
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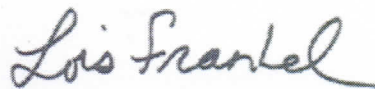
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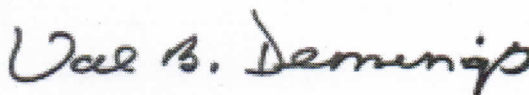
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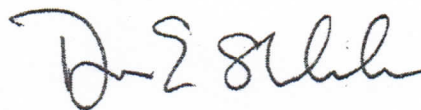
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