April 12, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Administrator Gaynor,

We write on behalf of our collective memberships at the American Health Care Association (AHCA), Health Industry Distributors Association (HIDA), and National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) to request the opportunity to engage with you and appropriate staff on the COVID-19 response and the unique needs of nursing homes and assisted living facilities as well as the supply chain that supports them.

The members of our associations represent health care providers and suppliers providing care at thousands of locations to millions of Americans. Medical-surgical wholesalers deliver medical products and supplies, manage logistics, and offer customer services to more than 294,000 points of care. Included in these are over 13,500 skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and 28,000 assisted living facilities who deliver care to over 3.9 million Americans annually.

In this unprecedented COVID-19 response, all healthcare sectors are doing their part to assist. Specifically, nursing homes and assisted living facilities are being asked to take patients from hospitals that may be positive for the COVID-19 virus or dealing with an outbreak within the facility. However, staff in these facilities have little to no access to PPE. Distributors supporting these facilities also have little to no access to PPE as these products are not typically used in this provider setting.

We appreciate your efforts to date to get PPE and other medical supplies to where they are most effectively used to combat COVID-19, including to nursing homes and assisted living facilities. We believe the vulnerable populations served by nursing homes and assisted living providers requires consistent and ready access to PPE nationwide. We believe the nation’s nursing homes, assisted living facilities and the specialized distributors who serve them should be especially prioritized for PPE supplies.

We are grateful to the dedicated FEMA and HHS teams that are leading the effort on COVID-19 and PPE. You have made incredible progress in pressing circumstances. We appreciate all you and your teams have done and look forward to continuing the public-private collaborations to address this issue. Thank you for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,

Gov. Mark Parkinson
President and CEO
American Health Care Association/
National Center for Assisted Living

Matthew J. Rowan
President and CEO
Health Industry Distributors Association