



Home Healthcare Workers of America

138-50 Queens Blvd, Briarwood, NY 11435 • 718-658-4848 • fax: 718-523-4732 • www.hhwa.care

May 7, 2020

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

I write on behalf of 22,000 dedicated home health care workers, serving the elderly and homebound, and have been deemed crucial workers in caring for society's most vulnerable from the ravages of Covid-19. Our workforce delivers quality care, while allowing the infirm to remain in their own homes.

We believe that our federal leadership has a duty to protect and guarantee our front-line workers caring for the sick and elderly, allowing them proper PPE, access to testing, and enhanced compensation-hazard pay, through the federal government.

Most of America's 2-million home healthcare workers are female, and over half are people of color. Home Healthcare Workers of America (HHWA) members are based in New York and part of the 100,000-member, International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades (IUJAT).

Despite the heavy burden and challenges of caring for vulnerable populations, home healthcare worker resources are at the bottom of the list, as hospitals and nursing homes have been prioritized, for funding and personal protective equipment (PPE). It has left countless home health agencies hanging on for survival, faced, with little access to federal relief.

These conscientious caregivers provide for vital daily needs: shopping, food preparation, feeding, bathing and dressing, administering medication, and companionship.

Our workforce enables clients to remain in their own homes and prevents more costly hospitalizations, burdening a **stressed** healthcare system. Without the necessary resources and PPE, our members cannot effectively perform essential care duties and risks exposing themselves, their families, and clients to the virus.

How we prepare now, will predict the success of our ongoing fight with this pandemic. To guarantee necessary resources are available, the Home Healthcare Workers of America urges Congress to:

- ❖ Increase Federal Medical Assistance Percentages for home healthcare workers and aides
- ❖ Require the State Medicaid programs to provide pass-through funding to home healthcare providers for worker support, including hazard, sick pay, childcare, and transportation subsidies.
- ❖ Require the State Medicaid programs reimburse home healthcare providers for COVID-19 and related administrative costs, including PPE supplies, increased overtime, and employee retention.

We urge your swift action in providing the needed support for home healthcare workers in response to COVID-19. Thank you for your consideration of these vital funding needs.

Sincerely,

Lori Ames

Secretary-Treasurer

HHWA, IUJAT