

April 20, 2020

Dear Secretary Azar & Administrator Verma,

On behalf of the members of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), we write to request an update on the disbursement of the remaining \$70 billion dollars in the Provider Health and Social Service Emergency Fund. We know there is tremendous pressure on federal officials to disburse these funds and there are numerous sectors representing millions of Americans in dire need of support. At this time, we are extremely concerned that Medicaid providers of services and supports to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and autism are being overlooked.

As you know, the people we serve across the country, who rely on Medicaid because they were born with an intellectual, developmental or physical disability, represent one of the core groups this safety net was created for in 1965. We are writing to ask for transparency as decisions are made about how to distribute this tranche, specifically:

- What is the timing of the next tranche;
- Will I/DD Medicaid providers be included in the next tranche; and
- If I/DD Medicaid providers are to be included, how is HHS planning to deliver funds to these Medicaid providers?

Our system of services for people with I/DD and Autism is the first line of defense for millions of people. It is our Direct Support Professionals who are keeping those they support out of the emergency healthcare system. A story in The Washington Post last week highlighted the struggles of a dedicated Direct Support Professional in a powerful way. [“Across the nation, we are — rightly — applauding health-care workers nightly, but many people have no idea what that man and his colleagues do daily. They work in one of the most difficult, and hidden, health-care jobs in the country. And it is one that has landed them, too, on the front lines of this pandemic.”](#) This is happening right in the heart of our nation’s capital. From the New York Times to the Chicago Tribune, the news media is now exposing how vulnerable this population is to this virus. **Providers are reporting COVID-19 deaths of both staff and individuals supported, but with the exception of the media coverage and our advocacy cries, it appears our sector continues to not be prioritized. It is in your power to correct this by ensuring I/DD providers are included in HHS response funding.**

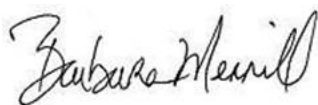
**Without our staff, there are no community-based services and without our providers, there is no community-based infrastructure for some of the country’s most vulnerable citizens.** We are essential to the health and safety of millions of people and we are asking for your support to stabilize our organizations, support our workforce, and support our access to personal protective equipment.

We thank you for your incredible leadership throughout this pandemic and are extraordinarily grateful for all you and your team have done to support flexibilities and rate enhancements in the states. Unfortunately, many

states continue to lag in implementing needed rates enhancement for our workforce needs. That makes the emergency fund disbursements all the more urgent. Our providers simply cannot afford to wait any longer for needed support.

Thank you for your advocacy for our services.

Respectfully,



Barbara Merrill, CEO  
ANCOR