March 31, 2022

Dear Senators and Representatives:

AARP, on behalf of our 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, calls upon Congress to immediately pass critical funding necessary to protect the health and safety of older Americans.

The United States has now seen more than one million deaths from COVID-19 and a staggering 93 percent of reported deaths have been people age 50 and older. The older Americans lost to this virus were parents and grandparents, community members and friends.

Like all Americans, AARP’s members urgently want to see an end to the pandemic. But we cannot simply pretend the fight is over. Without action by Congress, our country will not have the tools necessary to continue fighting this disease. In short, if Congress fails to fund the COVID response, it will be older Americans who will pay the price.

Existing federal response funds are now almost completely depleted, and crucial tools and services that have saved lives are already being eliminated. Right now, if one of your constituents tests positive for COVID-19, they will face a limited supply of monoclonal antibodies due to canceled federal orders and limited distribution. Likewise, the medical providers in your state can no longer turn to the Uninsured Program for assistance when they care for COVID-19 patients; the program has stopped accepting new claims. Very soon, your constituents may once again have difficulty locating COVID-19 tests.

Recent reports indicate that there are insufficient funds to cover a fourth shot for those over the age of 50 who are recently eligible for a booster. Our country’s ability to develop vaccines or treatments for future variants would also be diminished.

After two years, the issues and needs presented by this pandemic should no longer be a surprise. COVID is not going away. Congress must take a long-term view and stop lurching from crisis to crisis or waiting for severe variants to emerge before acting. The current lapses in funding are unacceptable. The American people deserve better.

We appreciate the efforts underway to reach an agreement. On behalf of all those who lost loved ones to this pandemic, AARP urges Congress to act swiftly to prevent any future lapses in funding. We stand ready to help in any way that we can. Please feel free to contact me or have your staff contact Bill Sweeney, Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at bsweeney@aarp.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Nancy A. LeaMond
Executive Vice President and
Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer