

Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act

Sponsored by: Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)

Why do we need the Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act?

More than [105 million Americans—or about 4 in 10 adults](#)—are at heightened risk if infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), including older adults, people with disabilities and those with underlying health conditions. The front-line workers and family caregivers who support these individuals also face increased risks, requiring additional resources and supports to protect their health and well-being.

What would the Coronavirus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities Act do? The bill will address critical health and economic needs for older adults, people with disabilities, front-line workers and family caregivers. **Specifically, the bill would:**

Increase funding for nursing home surveys to promote infection control: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has deployed its armament of state inspectors to assess nursing facilities' infection control practices as COVID-19 continues to spread. Well before COVID-19, these essential activities were already operating at a deficit, as the Trump Administration requested a \$44.8 million increase for health facility surveys and inspections in FY2021. Emergency funds are needed to support CMS and States as they work to save lives and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes.

Cover the cost of treatment for low-income seniors and boost the economy: The bill would leverage existing low-income assistance programs for people with Medicare to ensure seniors and people with disabilities living on low, fixed incomes can afford the treatment they need if diagnosed with COVID-19. Individuals living on incomes at or below roughly \$19,000 who have limited savings would be auto-enrolled in assistance to cover the cost of their Medicare Part B premiums and cost-sharing. The bill would also enhance economic stimulus by putting Medicare premium dollars back in beneficiaries' pockets. Seniors and people with disabilities would keep about \$145 per month, allowing them to buy needed essentials, like food and medicine.

Promote home and community-based services and protect home health workers: Through Medicaid grants to States, the bill would provide funding to ensure that seniors and people with disabilities who need care at home can receive it. States need these additional, new dollars to minimize waiting lists for home and community-based services and to provide wage increases as well as overtime pay and paid sick, medical and family leave to home health workers.

Make sure seniors and people with disabilities have healthy food and other services at home: The bill would provide increased, emergency funding for programs that allow seniors and people with disabilities to remain healthy and safe at home—where the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) urges they remain during the COVID-19 outbreak. Funding would allow States and community-based providers to offer 3 meals a day, 7 days a week during the emergency; provide shelf-stable food to more seniors through the Senior Food Box program; provide respite care and other supports to family caregivers; support ombudsman programs that must transition to virtual services while nursing homes are locked down to limit the spread of COVID-19; and more.

Supporters- Access Living, ACHEIVA of Allegheny County, American Association on Health and Disability, American Physical Therapy Association, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), Brain Injury Association of America, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Center for Public Representation, Cure Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Elder Justice Coalition, Lakeshore Foundation, National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, National Commodity Supplemental Food Program Association, National Council for Aging, National Down Syndrome Congress, Pennsylvania APSE, Program to Improve Eldercare, Altarum, Social Security Works, The Arc of the United States and United Spinal Association

Original Co-Sponsors- Senators Booker (D-NJ), Brown (D-OH), Menendez (D-NJ) and Jones (D-AL)

For more information or to cosponsor, contact: Stacy Sanders at Stacy_Sanders@aging.senate.gov, Michael Gamel-McCormick at Michael_Gamel-McCormick@aging.senate.gov or Samantha Koehler at Samantha_Koehler@aging.senate.gov