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August 6, 2020

Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Gaynor & Secretary Azar,

I write today with serious concerns about shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) at long-term care facilities and reports that Wisconsin nursing homes recently received defective and unusable PPE from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)¹. Nursing home employees reported receiving expired gloves that often didn't fit and garbage bags without arm openings meant to be used as gowns. Given the persistent shortages masks, gowns, eye protection, and gloves at nursing homes and other long-term care facilities throughout the country, I urge you to provide appropriate PPE to long-term care facilities in a timely manner.

According to the Department of Health Services, over 40% of the deaths related to COVID-19 in Wisconsin have been linked to long-term care facilities². Nursing homes are reporting severe shortages of PPE and have not been able to obtain enough equipment through their traditional suppliers. Additionally, these facilities are often forced to pay significantly higher prices than they would have before the pandemic. These widespread supply chain issues can only be addressed with support from the FEMA, the Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), and other federal agencies.

After nearly six months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, these persistent shortages of PPE and testing materials are unacceptable. I urge you develop a plan in order to provide a consistent supply of appropriate PPE for long-term care facilities. The lack of a nationwide plan and the shortages of PPE are putting patients and long-term care staff at risk.

I appreciate your attention to this critical matter and look forward to hearing back from you in the coming days.

Sincerely,



Ron Kind
Member of Congress

¹ <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2020/07/27/wisconsin-nursing-homes-worry-ppe-shortage-coronavirus-climbs/5474751002/>

² <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/deaths.htm>