



New Survey Spotlights the Immediate Needs of Vulnerable Older Adults in Affordable Housing Communities

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 5, 2020**

Contact: Melanie Ripley
mripley@leadingageca.org

Sacramento, CA – More than two-thirds (69 percent) of affordable senior housing providers have experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19, according to a recent survey conducted by LeadingAge. The pandemic has dramatically increased provider’s expenses by requiring the purchasing of unbudgeted items like touchless thermometers, PPE and hand sanitizer.

Many of these affordable housing programs rely on funding from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and 31 percent of surveyed providers reported that they have received delayed payments from HUD since the beginning of the pandemic. The residents of these HUD-assisted affordable senior housing communities, with average incomes below \$14,000 and more chronic health conditions than their non-HUD-assisted peers, are some of the most at-risk populations for COVID-19.

“These housing providers serve the populations that have been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, including low-income communities, people of color, and those who suffer from chronic health conditions,” said LeadingAge California President and CEO Jeannee Parker Martin. “We cannot afford to let the critical needs of these communities remain unaddressed.”

Aside from ongoing financial concerns, 84 percent of the surveyed providers identified residents’ social isolation and access to services as their top challenge in the next three months.

Older adults are already at an increased risk for loneliness and social isolation, and associated health risks like cognitive decline and depression because they are more likely to live alone and experience chronic illness. While physical distancing protects senior living and care facilities from the spread of COVID-19, the isolation that it creates poses a substantial threat to the health and wellbeing of older adults.

“This is a wake-up call: COVID is not just a nursing home issue,” said Katie Smith Sloan, president and CEO of LeadingAge. “This data shows why Congress must act now to help millions of vulnerable older adults for whom COVID could be a death sentence. Funding and access to testing, personal protective equipment, and other resources are critical to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among residents and staff in their communities,” said Katie Smith Sloan, president and CEO of LeadingAge.

A full summary of the survey results can be found [here](#).

###

About LeadingAge California: *Founded in 1961, LeadingAge California is the state's leading advocate for quality, non-profit senior living and care. The association's advocacy, educational programs and public relations help its members best serve the needs of thousands of the state's older adults. LeadingAge California represents nearly 700 nonprofit providers of senior living and care – including affordable housing, continuing care retirement communities, assisted living, skilled nursing, and home and community-based care; as well as our business partners. For more information, visit www.leadingageca.org.*

About LeadingAge: *We represent more than 5,000 aging-focused organizations that touch millions of lives every day. Alongside our members and 38 state partners, we address critical issues by blending applied research, advocacy, education, and community-building. We bring together the most inventive minds in our field to support older adults as they age wherever they call home. We make America a better place to grow old. For more information, visit www.leadingage.org*