



May 31, 2020

Dear Governor,

Thank you for all of your hard work to keep your citizens safe as the nation battles the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). Our agencies have deeply appreciated your commitment to working hand-in-hand with the Trump Administration thus far. We write today with another, critical request as we implement President Trump's Plan to Open Up America Again.

As you know, the Trump Administration, acting through our two agencies, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recently implemented an unprecedented nationwide COVID-19 surveillance system through CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network for America's Medicare and Medicaid-certified nursing homes. We have reviewed the first tranches of data received through this system. As of May 24, 2020, approximately 12,500 nursing homes – approximately 80 percent of the 15,400 Medicare and Medicaid-certified nursing homes – had reported to the CDC. These facilities reported over 60,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases and almost 26,000 deaths. This data, and anecdotal reports across the country, clearly show that nursing homes have been devastated by the virus. As we look ahead to reopening America, CMS and CDC are taking a number of actions to keep nursing home residents safe. First, CMS is increasing penalties for noncompliance with longstanding infection control requirements. CMS is ensuring states conduct necessary surveys of nursing homes by tying survey funding to State Survey Agency performance. CMS is also continuing deployment of its network of Quality Improvement Organizations to provide an array of assistance, and will work with governors to target assistance to facilities that have experienced outbreaks. CDC is assessing and providing guidance and technical assistance to improve infection control practices to nursing homes and state health departments.

Attached is a chart that provides detailed information for each state regarding the data already reported in from each state's nursing homes. It also includes information about the number of Targeted Infection Control Surveys completed by each state as of May 29, 2020. This information will be publicly posted by CMS on June 1, 2020, and updated data will be compiled on a rolling basis.

We are also calling on you to focus your testing on nursing homes and other vulnerable communities. The Trump Administration recently announced that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is delivering \$11 billion in new funding to states, territories, localities,

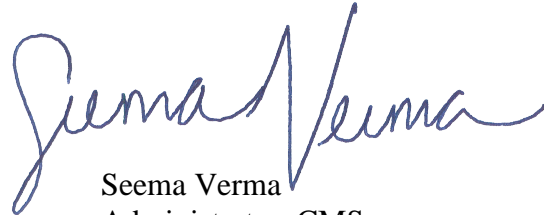
Indian Health Service facilities, tribes, and urban Indian Health programs to support COVID-19 testing. To ensure this funding is put to its highest and best use, it is absolutely imperative that each state develop a comprehensive testing plan, and submit that plan to HHS. [CDC and CMS have developed guidance documents on reopening nursing homes](#) that might help inform your plans for testing.

With your help, we can win the war against COVID-19 and reopen America again.

Sincerely,



Robert R. Redfield, MD
Director, CDC



Seema Verma
Administrator, CMS