



October 24, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of 69 national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. LCAO coalition members support programs critical to helping millions of older adults and caregivers age with dignity, health and independence in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

We are writing in response to your notification to Congress that you intend to reallocate more than \$265 million in FY 2018 appropriated funds to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These funds would come from already underfunded, direct-services programs that support older adults and caregivers to administration activities assisting immigrant children and families. We understand the need for an increase in funding for unaccompanied children, but it should not come at the expense of inflicting hardship on our senior population.

Specifically, the members of LCAO are very concerned about the strategy to divert funding for community-based programs that support economically and medically vulnerable older adults and caregivers. We oppose the proposals to reallocate funding from Older Americans Act (OAA) and other aging programs administered by the Administration on Aging (AoA) and Administration for Community Living (ACL), health promotion and injury prevention programs under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), funding for research under the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and for health and medical research efforts targeting Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias.

We are also troubled about the precedent that this reallocation process establishes. We urge HHS to pursue established and appropriate channels through Congress to secure supplemental funding to respond to the crisis of children needing care. While we understand that there is limited statutory authority for the HHS Secretary to transfer funding to support unexpected priorities, the decision to redirect funding from direct-services programs supporting older adults and caregivers puts an already vulnerable population at risk to respond to a crisis that is a result of the Administration's own policies. Older adults, caregivers and the community-based organizations that deliver critical services to keep this population healthy in their homes and communities should not be required to sacrifice already insufficient funding to accommodate the consequences of the Administration's decision making.

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations encourages HHS to reverse course and to seek necessary funding through the annual or supplemental appropriations process for children in need and to ensure that Older Americans Act and other important aging and health programs will be funded at levels that enable them to meet a rapidly growing demand for services. Thank you for considering this request, and we look forward to working with you to ensure a sustained investment in the OAA and other key aging and health programs.

Sincerely,

Association for Gerontology and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (AGHDHBCU)

Aging Life Care Association

Alliance for Aging Research

Alliance for Retired Americans

Alzheimer's Foundation of America

American Association of Service Coordinators

American Geriatrics Society

American Society on Aging

B'nai B'rith International

Center for Medicare Advocacy

Community Catalyst

Easterseals

International Association for Indigenous Aging

The Jewish Federations of North America

Justice in Aging

LeadingAge

Meals on Wheels America

National Adult Day Services Association

National Adult Protective Services Association

National Association for Home Care and Hospice

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Association of RSVP Directors (NARSVPD)

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

National Association of State Long-Term Care Programs

National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

National Council on Aging

National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA)

PHI - Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute

Service Employees International Union

Social Security Works

The Gerontological Society of America

WISER

cc:

Chairman Richard Shelby and Ranking Member Patrick Leahy, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee

Chairman Roy Blunt and Ranking Member Patty Murray, Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee

Chairman Tom Cole and Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committee