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August 27, 2020

DELIVERED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Eric J. Holcomb  
Office of the Governor  
Statehouse  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2797

Dear Governor Holcomb:

Thank you for your continued partnership and for your leadership in providing more transparency through the implementation of the Long-term Care COVID-19 Dashboard, where facility specific data is published, easily accessible for Hoosiers, and updated weekly. These new numbers, and the differences from what had previously been reported, highlights how important it is to make this information publicly available and AARP Indiana applauds your continued work to ensure that the dashboard delivers timely and accurate information. This data provides families with the information they need to make the best decision for their loved ones, learn if outbreaks in facilities mirror what is happening in communities, and better deploy resources like personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing for residents and staff.

Therefore, on behalf of our 825,000 AARP Indiana members and all older Hoosiers, we appreciate the work you have undertaken to address the unprecedented public health and economic crisis that we face as a state. We know that these important efforts are ongoing as your Administration continues to determine how to spend the \$2.4 billion from the coronavirus relief fund that Congress allocated to our state and local governments as part of the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*.

The gravity of the present challenge requires your Administration to act decisively to spend these dollars as Congress intended – to mitigate the public health and financial impacts created by COVID-19. At the same time, we hope that we can depend on your Administration to continue to provide transparency and accountability related to how Indiana has expended the coronavirus relief funds to date or has obligated to expend these funds.

We hear every day how older Hoosiers and their families are being particularly hard-hit by both the health and financial impacts of this pandemic. As we have seen with deaths and isolation

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Real Possibilities

among residents of long-term care facilities as well as the struggles to access new technologies to meet healthcare needs, older residents and their families require additional supports to weather and survive this storm. This struggle has also been highlighted by the number of Hoosiers seeking access to in-home services, rental, utility, and mortgage assistance needed to stay safe at home. To that end, as you make further decisions regarding how to spend the coronavirus relief funds, AARP Indiana urges you to consider funding for the following AARP priorities:

- Funding for in-home services to provide people, especially those with underlying health conditions, personal care assistance while under quarantine, help with household chores and grocery shopping, and transportation to essential services (such as grocery stores, banks, or doctors) when necessary.
- Funding to ensure full access to testing and sufficient PPE for staff and residents of long-term care facilities. If supply shortages prevent wide-spread testing, the state should prioritize testing for individuals with known contact with COVID-positive individuals, and for staff that have direct contact with residents, regardless of whether or not they are experiencing symptoms. While we appreciate that the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) announced that it will begin the second round of required testing for all nursing facility staff across Indiana, we urge ISDH to adopt a more robust testing strategy and schedule moving forward for both staff and residents.
- Funding for equipment and sufficient staffing to facilitate virtual visitation for residents of long-term care facilities, along with requiring facilities to make video-conferencing or other technologies available for residents and their loved ones. For residents and their families, remaining connected is essential to their safety and health, including protecting against social isolation. As in-person visitations in nursing homes and other residential care facilities are largely halted, virtual visitation between residents and their loved ones is critical.

AARP Indiana has virtually attended both the June and August Budget Committee Meetings and reviewed the information posted on the Indiana State Budget Agency (SBA) website ([www.in.gov/sba/2811.htm](http://www.in.gov/sba/2811.htm)). To provide improved budget transparency and ensure that all Hoosiers have a clear understanding of how our CARES Act funds are being committed and spent to mitigate the devastating health and financial impacts of the pandemic, we respectfully request that the website be updated to include the following essential information:

- A list of the agencies receiving the funds, the amount each agency is receiving, and a very specific, itemized breakdown of what those funds are being spent on.
- The amounts allocated for each specific program and project.
- Specific allocations made to each local unit of government; and whether the state is holding back money, and if so, how much and for what purpose.

We are eager to learn more about Indiana's specific plans to spend the coronavirus relief funds, and to continuing our mutual work to protect Hoosiers as we confront the health and economic impacts of the coronavirus. The recommendations discussed above, when implemented, can provide clear, immediate, and meaningful relief to older Hoosiers across Indiana. We look forward to hearing from you or your staff. If you have any questions, please contact me at (317)

319-8621 or [swaddle@aarp.org](mailto:swaddle@aarp.org) or you may contact our Legislative Director, Ambre Marr at (317) 801-2584 or [amarr@aarp.org](mailto:amarr@aarp.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Waddle".

Sarah Waddle  
State Director, AARP Indiana

cc: Indiana Office of Management and Budget Director, Cris Johnston  
Indiana State Budget Director, Zachary Jackson  
Indiana Family and Social Services Administration Secretary, Dr. Jennifer Sullivan  
Indiana State Department of Health Commissioner, Dr. Kristina Box  
Indiana Family and Social Services Administration Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Dan Rusyniak  
Indiana Economic Development Corporation Chief of Staff, Luke Bosso  
Governor Eric J. Holcomb Chief of Staff, Earl Goode  
Representative Tim Brown  
Senator Ryan Mishler  
Representative Greg Porter  
Senator Karen Tallian