

# Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

AGING IS SOMETHING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON

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April 8, 2020

The Honorable Speaker Pelosi  
C/o Reva Price  
US House of Representatives  
Washington DC

Dear Honorable Speaker Pelosi:

Thank you for continuing to lead the way during this defining moment in our history. We are so grateful for your fire and courage that continues to push the envelope, demand answers and accountability, and defy any movement that is counterproductive to justice and equality for Americans at risk.

I write to you today wearing two hats: one, as a caregiver to my 92 year old mother; two, as a director of a coalition of 40 nonprofit and public organizations that together provide community-based health and supportive services to over 79,000 older adults in Alameda County.

We urge Congress to act on the letter that Leading Age and NADSA submitted Congress, (<https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/LeadingAge%20NADSA%20letter%204.3.pdf>) asking for \$422.5 Million in relief for the nation's Adult Day Services programs. I wanted to highlight the areas of collateral damage related to human lives, that temporary or even permanent closures of these programs will have.

We, in California, did in fact endure a period of service disaster when Adult Day Healthcare (ADHC) was eliminated as a Medicaid option in 2011. We emerged from that disaster, but only after years of a legal battle, during which time centers could not recover, people became more ill, families lost work, and lives were prematurely institutionalized and lost. Many centers closed then and never recovered to this day.

We cannot bear to see similar damage happening at a national level during Covid 19. Alameda County is home to four adult day healthcare centers, two of them the largest in California. Together they have a total enrollment of over 500 chronically ill seniors and persons with disabilities, who on average have 5-8 chronic medical diagnoses, take 12 different medications, live alone (50%), and suffer from dementia (60%). Simply put, given that adult day services are lifelines for all these clients, if the centers don't survive, neither will the people.

The monetary relief from Congress will allow centers like those in Alameda County, to maintain services for this most frail of populations, either during the pandemic with alternative models of care, or to reopen their doors once it is safe to do so.

Adult Day Health participants are receiving telephonic wellness checks and monitoring, but many critical healthcare monitoring cannot be done over the phone. Once sheltering in place is lifted,

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these programs will need, more than ever, the strength and resources to start back up where they left off and to intervene promptly for those whose conditions worsened during this time. Historically, the industry of adult day care has not received adequate acknowledgement nor recognition for the critical role it plays in 1) Improving health; 2) Improving care; and 3) Reducing costs.

It may take a crisis such as this, to receive the fiscal, governmental and policy support we need to continue to keep our populations safe and out of institutional care. But if not now, when?

Thank you for your audacity and perseverance. I'm not sure where we would be without it. I am happy to discuss any of my concerns with you at any time. Be well and stay strong.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Wendy Peterson  
Director, Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County