



March 20, 2020

Alex Azar
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C St SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Secretary Azar:

National emergencies require us to move beyond business as usual and come together as a nation. Our government must act with urgency. And leaders of the largest, most powerful corporations must look past their bottom lines to do what's right for all working people.

On behalf of millions of service and healthcare workers on the front lines of this crisis, we demand immediate action by major industries and corporations to secure the health, safety, and long-term economic well-being of America's workers, regardless of where they work, their race, their immigration status, or current healthcare coverage.

- **Fully-funded, accessible healthcare for every worker, including paid leave and 100%-paid testing and treatment for COVID-19.** Corporations must provide full healthcare coverage to direct and franchise employees and contractors. Any uninsured person should automatically be enrolled in Medicaid. Every worker must be covered by permanent, comprehensive paid leave policies, providing immediate access to 12 weeks' leave at full pay for workers who are sick, mandated to stay home, or caring for loved ones.
- **Job, wage, and economic security for every worker.** Industries must provide easily accessed emergency child care funds, debt-relief, and housing assistance.
- **Immediate investment in the health and safety of every worker,** including taking the following actions to increase the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
 - Immediate distribution of the masks and equipment held in the Strategic National Stockpile.
 - Identifying reserves of masks/equipment in other industries, such as construction, and redistributing them to healthcare providers.
 - Using all powers of the federal government to speed immediate production of new equipment and ensure it is routed to states for distribution across acute care, home care and long term care settings. This process should be transparent for healthcare workers and healthcare employers.
 - And ensuring that all frontline healthcare workers across all settings and emergency response workers can be tested easily to slow the spread of the virus.



- **Provide emergency relief for states to hire and train healthcare workers and first responders, and expand healthcare, long term care, and child care coverage.**
- **Working families at the center of every emergency relief package.** Elected leaders of every party must act to put the health, safety, and financial well-being of workers first. Any industry relief or bailout must prioritize healthcare and financial support for workers over executive pay, shareholders, or profits. Relief efforts must directly address the disproportionate impact of economic and health crises on Black, brown, Asian Pacific Islander, and immigrant workers.

To more fully address the needs of people working on the frontlines of our healthcare system, including nurses, doctors, healthcare, home care and nursing home workers, we are calling on you to address the following steps:

- Call on Congress to Increase the Medicaid FMAP to ensure that healthcare workers, providers and states have the resources to meet the incredible demand facing them.
- Provide federal funding — whether Medicaid, CDC transfer funds, or the emergency supplemental funding — to states to both hire and train healthcare workers to help address staffing shortages.
- Enlist the national guard or other trained professionals to begin cleaning procedures in largest nursing homes and senior centers that don't have trained staff on site and are overwhelmed by the pandemic. Provide the same support to community health clinics in major urban centers where there are far more working people who have chronic diseases and no access to healthcare.
- Provide funding and resources for child care for healthcare workers who will be caring for patients and clients during this crisis.
- Ensure healthcare workers have the right protective equipment, are afforded reasonable respite, and be protected from discrimination arising out of their work with infected patients.
- Establish a COVID19 action team composed of nurses, doctors, home care and long term care workers to inform on the ground responses to mitigate the virus.

Protecting all workers is the patriotic and moral requirement of this moment, and always.

Signed,

Mary Kay Henry, International President
Service Employees International Union