



Hon. Seth M. Grove  
7 East Wing  
P.O. Box 202196  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2196

Dear Chairman Grove,

On March 4, 2020, as COVID-19 was ravaging a nursing home in Washington state, staff from the Pennsylvania Health Care Association (PHCA) reached out to our western counterparts, hoping to learn more about the virus and its effects. We asked our colleagues in Washington a simple question: what will nursing homes and long-term care facilities need if COVID-19 cases occur in Pennsylvania? Without hesitation, we were told that the most critical, immediate supplies our providers would need were masks, gowns, gloves and goggles, or personal protective equipment (PPE).

After just two cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Pennsylvania, long-term care providers began a desperate search for PPE. With manufacturing in China all but completely halted, nursing homes, personal care homes and assisted living communities would be forced to rely on both state and federal government leaders to send much-needed supplies. But with Pennsylvania's sole focus set on hospital systems, our long-term care continuum looked elsewhere: local manufacturers, grocery stores, dentists' offices, etc.

To compound the issue, long-term care providers were forced to defend their own diminishing supplies. On April 8, 2020, a state order was issued, requiring long-term care facilities to submit an inventory of their PPE. The order stipulated that this PPE could be *seized* as part of a misguided effort to support hospitals and other healthcare providers.

Additionally, just two months later, the legislature approved \$175M in CARES Act funding for the Regional Response Health Collaboration Program (RRHCP). What was originally pitched as a resource for PPE for long-term care providers fell far short of its intended goal.

Throughout 2020, PPE shortages remained, and prices set by national and overseas manufacturers were grossly inflated. According to the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), PPE has contributed to a \$2.7 billion cost for Pennsylvania's nursing home providers alone.

Given that case counts are rising once again, PPE usage is likely to remain in Pennsylvania's long-term care facilities. With exorbitant costs and a continuous need, it's not too late for Pennsylvania's leaders to prioritize long-term care, and deliver the support our providers, workers and residents desperately need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zachary Shamberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light gray background.

Zachary Shamberg  
President and CEO