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Delivered via email

June 12, 2020

Dear Members of the House and Senate Committees on Health and Welfare and Appropriations:

AARP Vermont, on behalf of our more than 130,000 members and all older Vermonters, appreciates the work you have undertaken to address the unprecedented public health and economic crisis that we face as a state. We are encouraged that these important efforts will continue as your committees determine how to spend the federal funds from the COVID-19 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 that we 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 the legislature to provide transparency and accountability related to how Vermont has expended the COVID-19 relief funds to date or has obligated to expend these funds. This would include disclosing the specific amounts the state plans to allocate to all programs and services; 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.

Older Vermonters and their families are being particularly hard-hit by both the health and financial impacts of this pandemic. From nursing home deaths and isolation, to seeking access to new technology to meet healthcare needs, to home care, rental, utility, and mortgage assistance needed to shelter in place, our older residents and their families require additional supports to weather through and survive this pandemic. To that end, as you make decisions regarding how to spend COVID-19 relief funds, **AARP Vermont urges you to fund the proposed Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program.**

The proposed Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program is necessary to stabilize Vermont's health care providers and care system to ensure that they are able to meet the continuing health care needs of Vermonters. The COVID-19 pandemic is also shedding light on a myriad of disparities in Vermont that existed before this crisis and that have been exacerbated in the months since the spread of the virus began. As a fierce defender of all older Vermonters, we believe it is critical to understand and address these health disparity issues and are very pleased that this funding proposal includes provisions to do so.

AARP
Real Possibilities

We look forward to continuing our mutual work to protect Vermonters, including aged 50 and older, as we confront the economic and health impacts of the coronavirus. The proposed Health Care Provider Stabilization Grant Program funding legislation discussed above can provide unambiguous, immediate, and meaningful relief at this critical moment in Vermont's history. If you have any questions, please contact Philene Taormina at ptaormina@arp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Marchildon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized "G".

Greg Marchildon, AARP Vermont State Director