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## **SENIOR CARE PROVIDERS STRONGLY SUPPORT THE STATE'S 5-POINT BATTLE PLAN TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE**

SAINT PAUL, MN – (May 7, 2020) – The Long-Term Care Imperative, representing Minnesota nursing homes and assisted living settings, today strongly supported the Governor's announcement of a five-point battle plan to help protect Minnesota's most vulnerable seniors.

"Governor Walz has heard the call from caregivers for an even stronger Minnesota collaboration to address the need for more testing, personal protective equipment and adequate staffing for senior care settings," said Gayle Kvenvold, President & CEO, LeadingAge Minnesota. "Senior care providers, who are actively working to prevent and mitigate coronavirus in their settings, welcome the news of this action plan and stand ready to implement its recommendations."

Before the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in a Minnesota senior care setting, providers were already implementing Centers for Disease Control and Minnesota Department of Health recommendations for strictly limiting visitors, as well as expanding social distancing and infection control procedures. Providers have also worked directly with officials at the State Emergency Operations Center to help shape emergency staffing plans and evolving infection control strategies.

Minnesota seniors who live in congregate care settings have accepted a heavy burden during this pandemic. These residents are more likely to suffer from the pre-existing conditions that COVID-19 targets, and if they are stricken, they must fight the disease while isolated from their families.

"Caregivers throughout the state support the goals to reduce transmission, support caregiving staff and protect residents and will move quickly to work with the Department to implement this plan," said Patti Cullen, Care Providers of Minnesota. "We are so grateful to our workforce who have continued to provide quality care under difficult circumstances, and know they will embrace these additional tools"

As testing expands, more cases will be discovered and staff within senior care settings will need to depend on this strengthened collaboration to address the growing care needs. This plan will require patience, as it will take time until all senior care settings can receive the testing and equipment needed to better protect our seniors and their staff.

"Minnesotans can be confident in knowing senior care providers are continuing to do all that they can to protect residents and staff, prevent illnesses and save lives," Kvenvold said. "We are inspired by the seniors in our settings who have endured and defeated the virus, at the same time as we share the sorrow of the families of those who we have cared for but lost during the pandemic.

Both Kvenvold and Cullen added that they expect the Governor's call to action will continue to evolve as more is learned about the virus, and as treatments and eventually vaccines become available.

"Having additional support in key areas of testing, PPE and staffing will contribute to our collective success against this deadly virus," Cullen added. "Today's announcement strengthens a valuable collaboration, and Minnesota's senior caregivers are ready to answer this call."

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