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## **5-Point Plan to Protect Long-Term Care Residents and Workers: Significant Progress Made, Challenges Remain**

The Long-Term Care Imperative, representing over 2,000 senior living settings throughout Minnesota, appreciates the partnership with the State of Minnesota in responding to the COVID-19 public health crisis. We echo Governor Walz's support for the work of senior caregivers as they tirelessly provide safe, quality care despite tremendous challenges.

In announcing the 5-Point Plan to Protect Minnesota's Long-Term Care Residents and Workers, Governor Walz recognized that long-term care providers face a special set of risks during this pandemic. A robust, coordinated plan was needed to ensure providers have support and resources in place to protect residents and workers during this pandemic. While significant progress has been made in some areas of the plan, challenges remain. We are not yet prepared to declare victory.

We must continue to be vigilant and responsive to the changing nature of this virus and commit to continued collaboration with the State of Minnesota to be well-prepared for the long-term response this pandemic requires of senior care providers. As cases spread among younger, less symptomatic populations, COVID will naturally continue its spread to higher-risk communities such as our senior care settings.

Congregate senior care settings need additional state assistance to secure testing, personal protective equipment and staffing in both nursing homes and assisted living not just for today but for the months to come. Until there is a vaccine, there is no other way to effectively contain and mitigate this virus in our settings. Moreover, we urge the State of Minnesota to exercise caution in determining whether to require senior care settings to reopen to visitors at this time.

We are all fully aware of the emotional toll of social isolation on the seniors in long-term care communities, and we continue to adapt strategies to reflect the current state of virus transmission within Minnesota. But we are also fully aware of how quickly this virus can spread in our settings with devastating results. Senior care providers remain committed to working with the State of Minnesota to identify workable solutions and welcome the opportunity to further discuss and continue our collaboration to fully implement the 5-Point Plan to Protect Minnesota's Long-Term Care Residents and Workers.

Patti Cullen  
President/CEO, Care Providers of MN

Gayle Kvenvold  
President/CEO, LeadingAge Minnesota

*The Long-Term Care Imperative is a legislative collaborative effort between Minnesota's two long-term care provider associations: Care Providers of Minnesota and LeadingAge Minnesota.*

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Jodi Boyne, LeadingAge MN, 612-749-9758; [jboyne@leadingagemn.org](mailto:jboyne@leadingagemn.org)

Lisa Foss Olson, Care Providers of MN, 952-851-2483; [lolson@careproviders.org](mailto:lolson@careproviders.org)