COMMISSION ON AGING

May 26, 2020

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Essential Support for Older Americans Amid COVID-19

Dear Senator Van Hollen,

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging would like to draw your attention to the attached letter to members of Congress from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). The letter sets forth several ways in which Congress can make an immediate difference in the lives of older adults made vulnerable by the coronavirus pandemic.

Area agencies on aging are on the front lines, responding to the needs of older adults who are not only medically vulnerable during the coronavirus pandemic but are also especially at risk for the negative effects of prolonged social isolation as a result of extended social-distancing policies. The coronavirus relief packages enacted to date have alleviated some of the need, but a crisis of this magnitude, which unquestionably harms the well-being and financial security of older adults, demands the boldest possible response.

Montgomery County is considered a "hotspot" for the coronavirus, with older adults at particular risk. Our own Area Agency on Aging, housed in the Department of Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Unit, is working closely with other County programs to ensure that vulnerable older adults have access to the safety net of vital services essential for their well-being. However, County and State resources for these programs are limited, and additional federal support is essential.

The Commission on Aging is authorized by the Older Americans Act and was established by Montgomery County in 1974 to advise County government on the needs, interests, and issues of older adult residents, and to advocate on their behalf at the local, state, and national levels. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to older adults in Montgomery County and across the State of Maryland, especially in these unprecedented times, and we thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Dinwiddie