

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Financial Services  
2129 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin S. Carson  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street S.W.  
Washington, DC 20410-0001

Dear Secretary Carson:

We write to express our deep concerns regarding HUD's response to the recent coronavirus outbreak in the United States. Affordable housing providers, including public housing agencies and private owners of HUD-supported properties, need guidance and resources to ensure the health and safety of their residents, particularly older adults, who disproportionately experience more serious effects of the coronavirus. However, so far HUD's guidance has been wholly inadequate, putting the lives of the 1.6 million older adults who live in HUD-assisted housing at risk.

In HUD-assisted properties that predominantly serve older adults, the coronavirus presents particular challenges, given the number of service providers who come and go from these communities every day to assist residents with their health needs. With each visit, these service providers can inadvertently expose residents to the coronavirus or be exposed themselves, and owners and staff currently do not have the information or resources they need to respond to a possible outbreak. This is particularly troubling given the fact that HUD-assisted residents who are enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid are significantly more likely to have chronic health conditions compared to others,<sup>1</sup> putting them at higher risk of developing more serious illnesses from the coronavirus.

HUD and the White House Coronavirus Task Force, on which you serve, must do more to fully respond to this public health crisis by ensuring America's most vulnerable people, and those who help take care of them, have the information and resources they need. HUD needs to quickly provide guidance that is more comprehensive and responds to the specific needs of HUD's rental assistance programs based on the populations they serve. HUD should provide literature for owners to distribute to residents to inform them and assure them of their housing rights in case they have to be treated for the coronavirus. HUD should also provide more direction to field offices so that they can better assist affordable housing providers to prepare or manage a possible outbreak in their properties. Additionally, affordable housing providers may require emergency funding to prevent or respond to the coronavirus in their communities, such as purchasing more soap, sanitizer, protective equipment, and hiring additional staff.

As the coronavirus outbreak continues to spread across the country, we urge you to take immediate and appropriate steps to adequately address the needs of HUD-assisted residents, especially those who are the most vulnerable to what can become a fatal illness.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services, *Picture of Housing and Health Part 2: Medicare and Medicaid Use among Older Adults in HUD-Assisted Housing. Controlling for Confounding Factors*. (August 2016).

Sincerely,



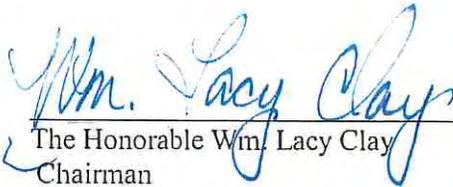
The Honorable Maxine Waters  
Chairwoman



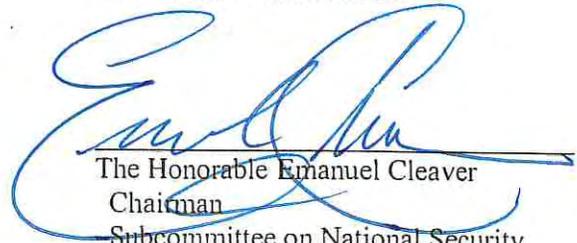
The Honorable Brad Sherman  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Investor Protection,  
Entrepreneurship, and Capital Markets



The Honorable Gregory Meeks  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection  
and Financial Institutions



The Honorable Wm. Lacy Clay  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Housing, Community  
Development and Insurance



The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security,  
International Development and  
Monetary Policy



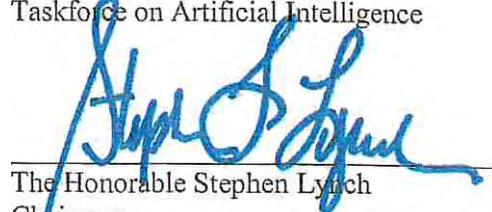
The Honorable Al Green  
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The Honorable Bill Foster  
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