



**For Immediate Release:**

July 8, 2020

**Media Contact:**

*Patrick Schwartz*

*330.933.9825*

## **LeadingAge Ohio Remembers the Elders Lost to Coronavirus, Urges Greater Support**

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – Today, LeadingAge Ohio joins its national affiliate LeadingAge and the Global Aging Network to [remember the elders of coronavirus](#). On this day of global mourning and remembrance for older adults lost to COVID-19, aging services providers, health care workers, and communities around the world are honoring hundreds of thousands of older lives lost.

“As providers on the frontlines of this crisis continue to fight this deadly infection, it is important to remember the human cost of this pandemic,” said Kathryn Brod, president and CEO of LeadingAge Ohio. “Older adults and care workers continue to be at risk each day, and decisive action is needed to prevent further unnecessary loss of life.”

Communities across the country are facing a dangerous surge in coronavirus infections that threatens millions of older Americans. In Ohio, more than 2,700 individuals aged 60 and older have died due to COVID-19 infections. Many of these losses have gone without the traditional displays of public grief, as funerals are downsized or postponed. The Day of Remembrance is one effort to publicly acknowledge the immense value of those lives lost.

“If our leaders don’t step up now and provide real resources, we’re going to be lighting candles around the clock to mourn a growing tally of needless deaths,” said Katie Smith Sloan, president and CEO of LeadingAge. “Federal policymakers should have learned from the catastrophe of round one, when the health of older Americans was not prioritized. As the virus surges, policymakers need to put nursing homes and other aging services providers first in line for testing and PPE. A second failure will be a death sentence for too many older Americans and their care workers.”

As part of its national “[Act For Older Adults](#)” campaign, LeadingAge is calling on Congress to adopt a comprehensive relief package based on LeadingAge’s Five Essential Actions. The package would supply crucial resources for all providers and staff who care for older adults, including:

- immediate access to ample and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE);
- accurate and rapid-results testing and the funds to cover costs;

- hero pay, paid sick leave, and health care coverage for the brave frontline workers who are risking their own lives serving older people during this healthcare crisis;
- a \$100-billion dollar emergency fund to help nursing homes and other aging services providers protect residents and clients. Complete details are provided [in a letter](#) from LeadingAge to senators and representatives.

LeadingAge has shared several resources in recent days detailing needed supports, including:

- A new LeadingAge backgrounder - [Five Essential Truths in the Fight Against COVID-19](#) - that provides expert data and analysis on the growing threat to older Americans; and
- Fresh evidence of shortages in [the testing](#) and [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) needed to protect older adults from COVID-19.

“Older lives are not expendable,” said Sloan. “Don’t walk away now.”

-30-

*Founded in 1937, LeadingAge Ohio is a nonprofit organization that represents over 400 long-term care organizations and hospices, as well as those providing ancillary health care and housing services, in more than 150 Ohio towns and cities. The continuum of care reflected by the member organizations serve an estimated 400,000 elderly Ohioans daily and employ more than 35,000 persons statewide.*