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**Nonprofit Coalition Comprising Easterseals, Caring Across Generations, Justice in Aging and The Arc of the United States Urges Congress to**

**Include Caregivers in “Families First Coronavirus Response Act” Sick Days/Paid Leave Provisions**

Chicago, IL (March 20, 2020) – A nonprofit coalition comprising Easterseals, Caring Across Generations, Justice in Aging and The Arc of the United States today announced a formal request to Congress to incorporate provisions for caregivers in its recently passed “Families First Coronavirus Response Act.” The current version of the legislation allows for 10 sick days and 12 weeks of paid leave for workers.

The new Act is intended to allow millions of Americans to take the time they need to care for themselves or family members as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread, with the specific intentions of lowering utilization of the healthcare system and ensuring that people with disabilities and older Americans can access the care they need when they need it.

“The Families First Coronavirus Response Act is crucial legislation, but it does not address the circumstances that the many individuals and families we represent will face in the coming weeks as normal sources of care are disrupted,” said Angela Williams, President and CEO, Easterseals, on behalf of the Coalition. “As with children who may no longer be able to attend school, many people with disabilities and older Americans will also no longer be able to utilize their usual sources of care. Direct care workers, such as direct support professionals, personal care attendants, and home health aides, who may become infected with the virus and subsequently will be unable to provide care. This is particularly concerning because of the current unrelated staffing crisis for these positions.”

As a result, most if not all, healthcare providers will struggle to replace direct care workers as the impact of the virus grows. “In addition, day programs and other day-time activities for people with disabilities and older adults across the United States are shutting down to prevent the spread of the virus,” according to Williams.



This will leave family members with new responsibilities in delivering care to their loved ones with disabilities or who are elderly, responsibilities that may include preparing meals or ensuring medications are properly taken. These workers are being, and will be, impacted by COVID-19 even if they or the one for whom they are caring are not directly infected with the virus.

“We must act now to ensure that the nation’s most vulnerable populations, and the people upon whom they rely, are cared for amidst this unprecedented crisis,” added Williams.

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### **About Easterseals**

For more than 100 years, Easterseals has served as an indispensable resource for individuals with disabilities, veterans, seniors and their families. Together, our 68 affiliates in communities nationwide serve 1.5M people through high-quality programs including autism services, early intervention, workforce development, adult day care and more. In schools, workplaces and communities, we’re fostering environments where everyone is included and valued — with a real and positive impact on us all. Join us in ensuring that everyone – regardless of age or ability – is 100% included and 100% empowered. Learn more at [www.easterseals.com](http://www.easterseals.com)

### **About Caring Across Generations**

Caring Across Generations is a national movement of families, caregivers, people with disabilities and aging Americans working to transform the way we care in this country. By harnessing the power of online and grassroots organizing and culture change work, we are shifting how our nation values caregiving and calling for policy solutions that enable all of us to live well and age with dignity. For more information, please visit [www.caringacross.org](http://www.caringacross.org).

### **About Justice in Aging**

Justice in Aging is a national non-profit legal advocacy organization that fights senior poverty through law. Formerly the National Senior Citizens Law Center, Justice in Aging has worked since 1972 for access to affordable health care and economic security for older adults with limited resources, focusing especially on populations that have been marginalized or excluded from justice such as women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, and people with limited English proficiency. Through targeted advocacy, litigation, and the trainings and resources we provide to local advocates, we ensure access to the social safety net programs that poor seniors depend on, including Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). For more information, please visit [www.justiceinaging.org](http://www.justiceinaging.org).



## **About The Arc of the United States**

The Arc advocates for and serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc has a network of over 600 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis. Learn more at [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org).