

## Over 400 Organizations Urge Department of Health and Human Services to Issue Guidance to Prohibit Discrimination during Medical Rationing

WASHINGTON D.C., April 16, 2020— Over 400 aging, disability, and patient organizations today sent a letter urging the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to issue further guidance addressing the application of federal non-discrimination laws to plans to ration scarce health care resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While HHS has previously issued a bulletin on this topic, advocates say additional guidance is necessary. In a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Office for Civil Rights Director Roger Severino, the coalition of organizations, led by the American Association of People with Disabilities, the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, the Center for Public Representation, the Disability Rights, Education and Defense Fund, and the Partnership for Improved Patient Care, called upon the HHS Office of Civil Rights to provide guidance clarifying, among other things, that federal law prohibits states and health care providers from making treatment allocation decisions based on assumptions that an individual's disability or age will lessen the possibility of survival beyond the short-term or require the use of greater treatment resources.

The letter noted that too many state and hospital Crisis Standards of Care plans discriminate against people with disabilities and older adults. If implemented, these plans would deny or give lower-priority to life-saving treatment to people based on disabilities or age that have nothing to do with their ability to survive COVID-19.

The disability rights community and its allies remain steadfast in their commitment to protect the rights of people with disabilities, patients, and older adults in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Read the full text of the letter here: <https://www.aapd.com/advocate-letter-supporting-nondiscrimination-final/>

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*AAPD is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power of people with disabilities. As one of the leading national cross-disability civil rights organizations, AAPD advocates for the full recognition of rights for the over 60 million Americans with disabilities. AAPD's programs and initiatives have been effective in mobilizing the disability community through communications advocacy; cultivating and training new and emerging leaders with disabilities through leadership development programs; increasing the political participation of Americans with disabilities and elevating the power of the disability vote through the REV UP (Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!) Campaign; and advancing disability inclusion in the workplace through the Disability Equality Index (DEI) — the nation's leading corporate benchmarking tool for disability equality and inclusion. To learn more about AAPD, visit [www.aapd.com](http://www.aapd.com).*