



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
330 C St SW
Washington, DC 20416

To Secretary Azar:

National emergencies require us to move beyond business as usual and come together as a nation. Our government must act with urgency. And leaders of the largest, most powerful corporations must look past their bottom lines to do what's right for all working people.

On behalf of millions of service and healthcare workers on the front lines of this crisis, we demand immediate action by major industries and corporations to secure the health, safety, and long-term economic well-being of America's workers, regardless of where they work, their race, their immigration status, or current healthcare coverage.

1. **Fully-funded, accessible healthcare for every worker, including paid leave and 100%-paid testing and treatment for COVID-19.** Corporations must provide full healthcare coverage to direct and franchise employees and contractors. Any uninsured person should automatically be enrolled in Medicaid. Every worker must be covered by permanent, comprehensive paid leave policies, providing immediate access to 12 weeks' leave at full pay for workers who are sick, mandated to stay home, or caring for loved ones.
2. **Job, wage, and economic security for every worker.** Establish industry funds to fully reimburse wages lost by workers whose hours or jobs have been cut or cut back. These funds must cover direct and franchise employees and contractors, compensate tipped workers at a rate of at least \$15 an hour and provide regular payments. Industries must provide easily accessed emergency child care funds, debt-relief, and housing assistance.
3. **Immediate investment in the health and safety of every worker.** Provide emergency relief for states to hire and train healthcare workers and first responders, and expand healthcare, long term care, and child care coverage. Corporations and industries should take aggressive, immediate measures to ensure clean, safe, sanitary work environments and protection from infection during this health crisis, with continuing access to personal protective equipment and training.
4. **Working families at the center of every emergency relief package.** Elected leaders of every party must act to put the health, safety, and financial well-being of workers first. Any industry relief or bailout must prioritize healthcare and financial support for workers over executive pay, shareholders, or profits. Relief efforts must directly address the disproportionate impact of economic and health crises on Black, brown, Asian Pacific Islander, and immigrant workers.

To more fully address the needs of workers in the child care industry, we are calling on you specifically to:

- Create an emergency child care fund to ensure the children of first responders, doctors, nurses, other healthcare workers and workers providing essential services for the community at large are cared for during this crisis. Direct funds to existing child care providers. Require corporations to contribute to this emergency child care fund.



- Encourage child care providers to keep their doors open, where doing so is safe, by raising subsidies, basing payment on enrollment instead of attendance, and offering public grants to cover fixed costs necessary to maintain or expand child care capacity. Child care providers will provide care for students while K-12 schools are closed.
- Provide paid leave for family child care providers, their assistants, and child care center teachers who are instructed by medical or public health officials to stay home or close their facilities for precautionary reasons.
- Give the USDA's nutritional assistance programs the flexibility to accommodate shortages in key food items.
- Halt foreclosures, evictions, or utility shut-offs for family child care homes and child care centers.
- Create regulatory flexibility, as long as child safety and health is safeguarded, to allow existing child care providers to expand capacity quickly. Refocus licensing compliance visits to support providers in this new climate with much-needed supplies and education on public health and child care guidance.
- Provide updated, relevant information in multiple languages- both written materials and phone calls.
- Include child care providers and their representatives in decision-making.

Protecting all workers is the patriotic and moral requirement of this moment, and always.

Signed,

Mary Kay Henry, International President
Service Employees International Union