



December 22, 2022

The Honorable Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Medicare Coverage of At-Home COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests

Dear Administrator Brooks-LaSure:

As our nation approaches the three-year mark in our fight against the COVID-19 virus, AARP is encouraged by the significant progress in bringing down the overall impact of the disease – but we know the fight is far from over, particularly for older Americans. Given the importance of at-home diagnostic tests to protecting the lives and health of older Americans, we urge you to take steps to ensure continued access to and coverage of these tests in Medicare.

Since the pandemic began, a staggering 93 percent of COVID-19 deaths have been people aged 50 and older. Even in recent months as death totals have decreased, more than 70 percent of COVID-19-associated hospitalizations have also been patients age 50 and older. In order to stay healthy in the winter months and beyond, older Americans will need access to all available mitigation tools that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) can provide.

AARP commends CMS for its actions earlier this year to expand Medicare coverage of at-home COVID-19 diagnostic tests at no costs to enrollees. These tests have been a crucial tool to minimize and slow down the spread of the virus. Having at-home tests on hand or easily accessible allows Medicare enrollees to take responsible actions at the first sign of illness, including isolation from others and seeking early treatment with anti-viral medications that are incredibly effective at preventing death and hospitalization. We understand that Medicare coverage of at-home COVID-19 diagnostic tests will expire at the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE). We urge CMS to explore all possible options to extend this coverage beyond the PHE and keep this critical tool available at no cost for older Americans.

On behalf of AARP's nearly 38 million members and all older Americans nationwide, we thank you for your continued efforts in the fight against COVID-19. If you have any

questions, please contact me or Andrew Scholnick (ascholnick@aarp.org) on our Government Affairs staff at 202-434-3793.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Certner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Certner
Legislative Counsel and Legislative Policy Director
Government Affairs