MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA AND NANASP ISSUE A
JOINT STATEMENT ON COVID-19 AND NEED FOR
SUPPLEMENTAL SENIOR NUTRITION FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Arlington, VA, March 9, 2020 – Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander and National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) Executive Director Bob Blancato released a joint statement regarding the federal response to the COVID-19 crisis:

On behalf of the two largest associations representing the nationwide network of senior nutrition programs, we urge the Administration to ensure these organizations are adequately resourced to serve seniors in need in the face of COVID-19 outbreaks in communities across the country through access to newly available supplemental federal funding and clear, timely emergency guidance for Older Americans Act (OAA) providers. Swift action and leadership are necessary to ensure community-based senior nutrition programs, those delivering nourishing meals directly to seniors’ homes and/or within group settings such as senior centers, are able to effectively respond to this evolving situation.

As with many illnesses, we know that older adults face higher risks of contracting COVID-19 and/or experiencing complications, particularly if they have underlying health conditions. We also know that the OAA Nutrition Program – congregate and home-delivered – serves as an invaluable lifeline to 2.4 million of our nation’s most vulnerable older adults, the majority of whom have multiple chronic conditions and take three or more medications daily. At a time when nearly 9.5 million seniors are struggling with hunger and one in four lives alone, we cannot allow the threat of COVID-19 to prevent seniors from accessing critical OAA nutrition services, further increasing hunger or isolation among this at-risk population.

The OAA Nutrition Program represents one of the best examples of a successful public-private partnership, and its programs are working. We look forward to working with the Administration, nutrition provider network, and our healthcare and nutrition industry partners to navigate these uncertain times and ensure that these vital services can continue to be delivered to our nation’s most vulnerable.

Read a joint letter sent to Vice President Pence and Secretary Azar by these two organizations here.

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About Meals on Wheels America
Meals on Wheels America is the leadership organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. This network serves virtually every community in America and, along with more than two million staff and volunteers, delivers the nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks that enable America’s seniors to live nourished lives with independence and dignity. By providing funding, leadership, education, research and advocacy support, Meals on Wheels America
empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time. For more information, or to find a Meals on Wheels provider near you, visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

About NANASP
Founded in 1977, the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) is proud to be a leading organization advocating for community-based senior nutrition programs and staff. Our member programs represent a wide range of essential services providers who support the nutrition, health and life quality of seniors. With over 1,100 members from across the United States, we are national advocates for senior health and wellbeing who strengthen the policies and programs that nourish seniors. We accomplish this mission through a collective national voice and through local community action. For more information, go to nanasp.org.

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