NANASP AND MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA HAIL HOUSE-PASSED COVID-19 RESPONSE BILL WITH $250 MILLION IN EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR SENIOR NUTRITION

Washington, DC, March 14, 2020 – National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) Executive Director Bob Blancato and Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander released a joint statement regarding the United States House of Representatives’ passing of H.R. 6201, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act:

As representatives of the nationwide network of senior nutrition programs, both congregate and home-delivered, we praise the House for its prompt and bipartisan passage of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This legislation includes a number of critical provisions that we have been working on with Congressional leaders aimed at supporting nutrition programs, namely $250 million in immediate emergency funds for Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs – Congregate, Home-Delivered and Native American Nutrition Services.

In particular, we greatly recognize and appreciate the efforts of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Subcommittee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), who along with their staff worked tirelessly and expeditiously through ongoing negotiations to ensure this bill truly reflects the needs of various assistance programs at this crucial time.

Together, the more than 5,000 senior nutrition programs nationwide serve one of our country’s most vulnerable populations, and amid COVID-19, local home-delivered and congregate meal providers alike have had to take extra precautions to protect the high-risk individuals they serve. This has involved making significant adjustments to their operations while simultaneously preparing for an increased demand for meals from a new wave of at-risk individuals looking for home-delivered meals as senior centers and community dining sites are forced to temporarily close. The additional funding provided in this legislation would help alleviate some of this new strain.

In times of crisis, it is more critical than ever that our leaders in Washington step up and find a bipartisan path to relief and solutions. We urge the Senate to follow the House’s example and move to expeditiously pass a bill that retains this funding and includes additional flexibility for states and communities for using these emergency nutrition funds. Our country is facing uncharted territory, and we must continue to work together to protect those who need it most.

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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.

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.

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