

Open Letter to Congress from the Real National ADAPT



Dear Congress:

For 30 years ADAPT has challenged the federal government's preference to fund nursing facilities and other institutions over home and community based services and supports (HCBS) that most older and disabled people say they want. People have had the right to stay in their own homes and live in their own communities with the services and supports they need, instead of being forced into nursing facilities and other institutional/congregate settings since 1990. However, this right has never been realized due to lack of support for home and community services, an extremely under-compensated and undervalued home and community workforce, and due to lack of affordable, accessible, integrated housing. We call this the institutional bias.

This long existing need for the reform of outdated Medicaid long term care policy has never been more apparent than now, when thousands of disabled people of all ages have been dying in nursing homes and other congregate settings where they have no protection from the highly contagious COVID 19, and where staff have not been provided with sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE). Even as [major media outlets](#) are reporting on the increasing death tolls of our family members and friends dying alone in nursing facilities across the nation, none of the trillions of dollars in COVID emergency spending that Congress has passed has gone toward the real, long term solution: ending the institutional bias and supporting HCBS, the HCBS workforce, and affordable, accessible, integrated housing.

There is an old adage that the government doesn't believe in prevention, and so you won't fund a stop sign until a kid gets killed while crossing an intersection. The time for this stop sign has well passed. The tens of thousands of deaths caused by the Coronavirus could have been greatly reduced if our federal government had acted earlier, and if Congress had listened to National ADAPT for the past 30 years and reduced nursing home and institutional settings with much needed reform in long term care, workforce and housing policies.

So we say to you now, have enough people needlessly died that you will finally listen to National ADAPT and address the institutional bias? **Now** is the time to sufficiently fund home and community services. **Now** is the time to fund affordable, accessible, integrated housing. **Now** is the time to provide liveable wages to the essential workforce of direct support workers that allow us to live in the community.

Now is the time because for 30 years we have told you that we want to live in the community. For 30 years we have told you that institutions are not safe for us. **Now** it is on the front page of your newspaper. **Now** it is in your newsfeed and you can not scroll past us anymore. **Now** thousands have died in nursing facilities and other institutions – our parents, our siblings, our friends. **Now** is the time for change.

ADAPT is ready to come to the table and work with Congress to end the institutional bias any time. Right NOW, we demand that funding for HCBS (including Money Follows the Person), community workforce, and housing (including emergency housing) be included in the COVID 4 package.

FREE OUR PEOPLE!

The Real ADAPT Community
www.nationaladapt.org
adaptnational@gmail.com