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September 22, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of the State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH
Secretary of Health
101 Israel Road SE
Tumwater, Washington 98501-5570

Dear Governor Inslee and Secretary Wiesman,

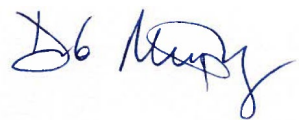
I'm writing to ask for a change in the Washington State Safe Start Reopening Guidelines that would be of significant benefit to seniors living in our long term care facilities. Currently, under the Safe Start Reopening Guidelines, "general use" swimming pools are allowed to open in Phase 1. However, pools that are part of a long-term care facility, including assisted living or life plan communities remain closed since they are classified as "limited use" pools under WAC 246-260-010.

Swimming has proven to be an effective therapy that allows residents to maintain mobility and muscle strength while decreasing fall risks. Many residents in these communities are eager to get back to therapeutic and recreational activities, such as swimming. The majority of the 300 messages sent to your offices regarding this issue have come from these residents. While this population is among the most 'at risk' for coronavirus infection, we have also seen negative mental and physical health declines due to isolation and decreased activity. As with general use pools, which are allowed to open in phase 1, pool activities within senior living communities could follow the same reopening guidelines and be limited to lap swimming, one-on-one lessons, and small group classes while maintaining social distancing. Seniors would be greatly benefitted by these activities while maintaining public health safety.

Long term communities will ensure that all the necessary precautions are taken.

We are happy to respond to any questions you may have and will, otherwise, look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "M".

Deb Murphy
President/CEO
LeadingAge Washington