

## From the desk of our President & CEO, Clint Bolser:

October 14, 2020

Dear Friends of UCP Heartland,

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the agencies that support them are impacted by the COVID-19 crisis causing stress and financial strain. The mandatory closures, then partial re-openings and continued uncertainty of the pandemic make everyone feel extremely uneasy, especially our clients that need to know we will be there for them through anything. The supports and services we provide are essential lifelines to the people we are entrusted to serve. UCP Heartland Residential Services, Respite, and Community Employment Programs must continue providing 24-hour care and support to maintain good health, safety and overall well-being of clients living in their own home and working in the community.

Your help is needed. Please reach out to your U.S. Congressional Representatives and Senators to let them know you are concerned about the future of nonprofit agencies that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Request their support to include aid that keeps disability programs for this vulnerable population adequately funded as the pandemic continues. It is crucial for them to hear your voice and understand that disability supports are a key component of health services. There will be a vast impact on people's lives if service providers cannot remain financially viable and in some unfortunate cases, not being able to operate. Congress must act now and support #ForgottenFaces in the next CARES Act addendum.

U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Jerome Adams, calls nonprofits a vital part of the fabric of society, and further describes our role as connecting people with essential and vital services during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Nonprofits are an inspiration," Dr. Adams said, adding that nonprofits across the country have proven that "social distancing doesn't mean social disengagement."

At UCP Heartland, we are grateful for the work Congress has done in the past with the CARES Act. However, it has been 6+ months since Congress passed this bill. Funding received from the CARES Act has come to an end while UCP Heartland Direct Support Professionals continue to show up every day to support people with disabilities in their homes, in the community and their jobs. The Paycheck Protection Program and Provider Relief Fund are helpful for Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) disability programs but only a short-term Band-Aid for needs created by the pandemic.

This is not a political issue; it is an issue of humanity. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families are counting on us to make sure they are healthy, safe and engaged as much as possible in the community.

When the dust settles and we return to life after the pandemic, the big question is: What will the options and landscape for people with disabilities look like in the future? It is crucial for Congress to understand that disability supports are a key component of health services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Congress also needs to understand the implications on people's lives in the community after the crisis if community supports cannot remain financially viable.

Most importantly, we need Congress to act and include #ForgottenFaces in additional funding to ensure there are adequate supports now and to return to once the current pandemic subsides.

Please help us get this important and vital message out. For easy reference, below is a list of U.S. Congressional Representatives, Senators, and their contact information. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly.

Sincerely,



Clint Bolser, President and CEO  
UCP Heartland  
636.779.2252

**Missouri - U.S. Congressmen, Congresswomen and Senators**

Representative William Lacy Clay	1281 Graham Rd, Suite 202, Florissant, MO 63031	314-383- 5240
Representative Ann Wagner	301 Sovereign Court, Suite 201, Ballwin, MO 63011	636-779- 5449
Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer	2117 Missouri Boulevard, Jefferson City, MO 65109	573-635- 7232
Senator Roy Blunt	260 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510	202-224- 5721
Senator Joshua Hawley	212 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510	202-224- 6154