Dear Care Facility Administrator:

On March 12, 2020, Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency in response to new cases of COVID-19 coronavirus in Wisconsin. He directed the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to use all resources necessary to respond to and contain the outbreak. On March 13, 2020, DHS issued guidance concerning recommendations for prevention of COVID-19 in long-term care and assisted living facilities that limited the access to these facilities by non-essential personnel. The goal of these directives is to ensure the health and safety of Wisconsin’s most vulnerable residents and DHS determined that they should remain in place for at least the next 30 days.

As you know, the Presidential Preference Primary and Spring Election is scheduled to take place on April 7, 2020 and voting for the residents of your facility is usually conducted by Special Voting Deputies (SVDs) sent by the municipal clerk of the municipality where your facility is located. The Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) determined that SVDs are not considered essential personnel according to the guidance issued by DHS and, therefore, should not be sent to your facility to conduct voting for this election. The municipal clerk will instead mail absentee ballots directly to all voters who have an active ballot request and reside in your facility. They will need to vote their ballots, seal them in the return envelope and fill out the required information on the certificate section of the envelope before mailing them back to the return address provided on the return envelope. Please note the following information is required to be filled out on the certificate envelope in order for the ballot to count:

1. Signature of voter
2. Witness signature (witness must be a U.S. citizen)
3. Witness address

In addition to this information, please be aware of two scenarios where you may be able to assist residents of your facility who are either not registered to vote or who do not have an absentee ballot request on file with the municipal clerk:

1. **Voter registration:** online and by-mail registration closes on Wednesday, March 18 for the April 7 election. Unregistered voters, or voters who need to update their registration due to a name or address change will need to register online or mail a voter registration form back to the municipal clerk by this deadline. If by mail, the form must be postmarked by the Wednesday deadline and include a proof of residence document, such as an intake form from your facility, bank statement or other government-issued document, that lists their current name and address where they would like to be registered to vote. Online voter registration is available via myvote.wi.gov for any Wisconsin residents with a current Wisconsin driver license or state ID card. More information on voter registration and proof of residence can be found here: <https://elections.wi.gov/voters/first-time-registration-guide>.
2. **Absentee ballot requests:** If you have a resident of your facility who does not have an active absentee request on file with the municipal clerk, they will have to submit a request in writing in order to receive a ballot. They will not automatically be mailed a ballot along the other residents of your facility. Requests can be made electronically via myvote.wi.gov or by email to the municipal clerk. They can also mail an application to the clerk using this form: <https://elections.wi.gov/forms/EL-121-english>.

We hope this information helps you provide information and assistance to your residents during this public health emergency. If you have any questions about these processes you can contact my office at [insert municipal clerk contact information] or by contacting the Wisconsin Elections Commission at (608)261-2018 or elections@wi.gov.