

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

We write as Maryland's congressional delegation to urge you to extend the COVID-19 public health emergency that is currently slated to expire on July 25, 2020. As the United States has hit new record numbers of new coronavirus cases in just the last week, with the largest single day increase in new infections (67,000) reported on Friday, it is clear that COVID-19 still represents a grave threat and continues to merit a public health emergency designation.

Our constituents rely on many of the flexibilities enabled by the public health emergency declaration. The increased Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) is essential to Maryland's ability to ramp up medical care during the pandemic. In addition, waivers to facilitate the provision of telehealth services have proven critical to providers and patients alike, as they allow for our constituents to be seen by medical providers to address other pressing health issues (including mental health and substance use disorder) without having to expose themselves to potential COVID-19 infection. And while the 20% Medicare inpatient add-on does not directly impact Maryland hospitals, it helps hospitals in other states to maintain the heightened staffing and supply lines that are necessary to treat COVID-19 patients.

These flexibilities have spurred innovation that will likely benefit our healthcare system in the long term. In the short term, however, they are absolutely necessary to the provision of medical care in Maryland and across the country. We have already begun hearing from constituents who are concerned that the emergency designation will expire, impeding their ability to access or provide healthcare. Please officially extend the public health emergency declaration as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/  
David Trone  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

/s/

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/

Steny H. Hoyer  
Member of Congress

/s/

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress

/s/

John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

/s/

Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

/s/

Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress