



June 30, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: COVID-19 public health emergency declaration

Dear Secretary Azar,

On behalf of our membership, the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) writes to urge you, as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to extend the COVID-19 public health emergency beyond July 25, 2020, when it is currently set to expire.

We appreciate your public health emergency declaration, effective January 27 and renewed effective April 26, and the presidential national emergency declaration. Together, these declarations authorized the implementation of Section 1135 waivers and emergency policies, which have provided the group practice and healthcare community with necessary resources and flexibilities. In particular, we appreciate actions taken to increase access to telehealth services; expand treatment location options; implement licensing and privileging flexibilities; modify or waive certain administrative requirements; exercise enforcement discretion and waive penalties for certain HIPAA privacy provisions; and adjust value-based care model rules.

Group practices responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by adjusting clinical and operational workflows to ensure the safety of their patients and staff, including developing or expanding telehealth capabilities overnight. The Administration's swift actions to authorize and approve waivers and flexibilities facilitated these remarkable response efforts.

Many states and localities continue to face surges in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, in addition to other new challenges. Across the country, the healthcare system is adjusting to a new environment and confronting numerous uncertainties, as there is no precedent for the current pandemic. Providers and healthcare executives should not also face uncertainty as to when critical program waivers and modifications will end. To continue the government's support of providers across the country, we urge you to maintain these policies and extend the public health emergency declaration before its expiration.

We appreciate your hard work at this critical time and consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact Mollie Gelburd at mgelburd@mgma.org or 202-293-3450.

Regards,

/s/

Anders Gilberg, MGA
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs