

July 10, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

We, the undersigned organizations, are committed to working with you, the Administration and Congress to meet the continued needs of the American public as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Together we represent millions of individuals working to address the unprecedented challenges the pandemic has presented to our society, our healthcare system, and our economy.

As such, we are writing to urge you to renew the current public health emergency (PHE) declaration for **at least** an additional 90 days before it expires on July 25. It is imperative that the federal government continue to deploy all resources and authorities necessary to protect the public and assist states and localities as they continue to respond to this urgent situation. As of the date of this letter, many states and localities are still experiencing dramatic increases in SARS-CoV-2 infections and hospitalizations due to COVID-19. At the same time, these areas are preparing for seasonal threats such as hurricanes, wildfires, influenza and more. We cannot afford to ease up on our response to this grave threat.

Furthermore, maintaining the PHE status is required if we are to increase the pace of research on SARS-CoV-2, accelerate development of medical countermeasures, streamline efforts to bring novel diagnostics, vaccine candidates and therapeutic options to market, and ensure that the public has access to health care and other social services.

In addition to the fact that it helps guard against complacency from the public while the threat of COVID-19 to the country remains high, an active PHE declaration has practical implications beyond the perception of the pandemic. A PHE is necessary to do the following:

- Facilitate coordination and collaboration across and amongst federal agencies and with state and local authorities, including providing flexibility for state, territorial and local health departments to reassign federally-funded personnel to assist with response;
- Facilitate the approval of new diagnostic tools to further expand testing in both symptomatic and asymptomatic populations, which is critical to a full reopening of society;
- Facilitate the approval of novel and repurposed medical countermeasures such as vaccines and antiviral drugs;
- Review and assure successful implementation of the July-December Jurisdictional Testing Plans, which are now due on July 10, 2020.
- Support those local and state public health officials who, in performing their legally-mandated duties to keep the public healthy and safe, have recently had their careers and safety threatened.
- Protect the most vulnerable in our communities by strengthening prevention efforts, maintaining increased access to telehealth, increasing access to testing, assuring quality health

care services, and addressing excess death rates in communities of color, among older adults, and those with serious conditions.

We urge you to extend the public health emergency declaration before its expiration later this month. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with you to move our nation through and beyond this pandemic. Questions may be directed to Allen Segal, the American Society for Microbiology's Director of Policy and Advocacy, at [asegal@asmusa.org](mailto:asegal@asmusa.org).

Sincerely,

African American Health Alliance  
AIDS United  
American Association for Clinical Chemistry  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases  
American Association of Bioanalysts  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Clinical Laboratory Association  
American Clinical Neurophysiology Society  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP)  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Dental Hygienists' Association  
American Lung Association  
American Medical Technologists  
American Optometric Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Investigative Pathology  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society for Virology  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
Association for Molecular Pathology  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Black Cardiologists  
Association of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools  
Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Beckman Coulter  
Big Cities Health Coalition  
BioFire Diagnostics, LLC  
Ceres Community Project  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
College of American Pathologists  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
CUGH  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
Endocrine Society  
Epilepsy Alliance America  
Epilepsy Foundation  
GenMark Diagnostics  
Health Leadership Legacy Project  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
HIV Medicine Association  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
International Safety Equipment Association  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Luminex Corporation  
Multipurpose Senior Services Program  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Independent Laboratory Association  
National Safety Council  
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition  
Prevent Blindness  
Prevention Institute  
Quantitative Health  
Research!America  
Safe States Alliance  
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Women's Health Research  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists  
STChealth LLC  
Tennessee Justice Center  
The Family Resource Network  
The Foundation for Sustainable Communities  
The Gerontological Society of America

Trust for America's Health  
UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health  
Washington State Department of Health  
Youth Villages