

October 2020

HHS Renews COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

The public health emergency renewal, **effective October 23, 2020**, extends the duration of a number of requirements related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including requirements under the following laws:

- [The Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#); and
- [The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#).

Among other things, these laws require group health plans to cover certain COVID-19-related diagnostic and preventive health services without cost-sharing or other barriers. These requirements are generally effective from **March 18, 2020, through the duration of the HHS-declared public health emergency**.

In general, a declared public health emergency lasts for 90 days or until HHS declares that it no longer exists, whichever occurs first. HHS may extend the public health emergency declaration for additional 90-day periods for as long as the public health emergency continues to exist.

Note that this public health emergency declaration is **separate** from the COVID-19 National Emergency declared by the President, which impacts the end of the “outbreak period” (beginning March 1, 2020) for deadlines related to HIPAA special enrollment, COBRA continuation coverage and other employee benefit plan deadlines.