



April 2, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States
Chair, White House Coronavirus Task Force
The White House Washington, DC 20500

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

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
7500 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Vice President Pence, Secretary Azar, and Administrator Verma,

Thank you for your leadership during the COVID-19 emergency. I write to you today to urge the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to open a one-time Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to provide eligible people an opportunity to enroll in comprehensive coverage through the federally-facilitated exchange. The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States with members in more than 145 countries worldwide. ACP membership includes 159,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

COVID-19 continues to dramatically alter our way of life. We appreciate the administrations and Congress' efforts to expand access to COVID-19 testing without cost sharing. However, millions remain uninsured or underinsured. ACP is concerned that those without comprehensive coverage may be less likely to seek and receive testing and treatment of COVID-19, endangering themselves and others. So far, 12 states (including the District of Columbia) with state-based exchanges have opened a SEP. CMS should follow suit and open a temporary SEP for the federally-facilitated exchange. We appreciate CMS' recent implementation of a SEP for those

who have lost job-based coverage. However, creating an emergency SEP now will ensure all eligible individuals have a chance to enroll in subsidized comprehensive coverage regardless of health status or current insurance coverage status. It will also enable people to enroll in coverage quickly without having to submit documents confirming loss of coverage as required under the existing SEP for loss of job-based coverage.

We appreciate CMS' dedication to addressing the COVID-19 emergency. However, more action is needed to remove barriers to care. We urge CMS to reopen the federally-facilitated exchange to provide another opportunity for people to enroll in comprehensive insurance that will cover COVID-19 testing, treatment, and other crucial services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. McLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert M. McLean, MD
President
American College of Physicians