



January 12, 2022

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

Re: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Renewal

Dear Secretary Becerra,

On behalf of our member medical group practices, the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) urges you to renew the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) declaration for at least another 90 days. We appreciate you extending the COVID-19 PHE through Jan. 16, 2022 but ask that you renew it before it expires.

With a membership of more than 60,000 medical practice administrators, executives, and leaders, MGMA represents more than 15,000 medical groups in which more than 350,000 physicians practice. These groups range from small private practices in rural areas to large regional and national health systems and cover the full spectrum of physician specialties and organizational forms – most of which have utilized the regulatory flexibilities afforded under the waivers in effect through the duration of the COVID-19 PHE.

Medical groups acted quickly in 2020 to pivot from in-person appointments to virtual ones, once the telehealth waivers went into effect. This involved significant investments in infrastructure as well as changes in workflows. To end these flexibilities now would be detrimental to patient access and care, especially at a time when the Omicron variant is wreaking havoc on our healthcare system. In a recent poll¹, almost half of MGMA members reported shifting to more telehealth visits amid this latest surge, citing safety as the primary reason.

As the voice for the country's medical group practices, MGMA remains committed to promoting policies that enhance the ability of our members to provide high-quality, cost-effective care to the millions of patients they serve routinely, and to the emergency cases they are called upon to serve during this pandemic. We urge you to renew the COVID-19 PHE before it expires on Jan. 16 to ensure medical groups continue to have access to the flexibilities necessary to ensure patient access and care. Should you have any questions, please contact Claire Ernst at cernst@mgma.org or 202-293-3450.

Sincerely,

/s/

Anders Gilberg
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs

¹ MGMA Stat, Jan. 11, 2022