AZAR RENEWS COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar signed a continuation of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) shortly before it was set to expire July 25th, extending temporary payment and enforcement flexibility affecting a wide range of stakeholders.

The emergency declaration gave the Trump administration broad authority to loosen telehealth restrictions, waive Medicare regulations, and ease Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act rules.

A PHE declaration lasts for 90 days after the HHS secretary declares the PHE or until the secretary says an emergency no longer exists, whichever comes first. Azar can extend the PHE declaration for 90-day periods for as long as the PHE continues to exist, and may terminate the declaration whenever he determines that the emergency is over.