



## State of New Jersey

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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PHILIP D. MURPHY

*Governor*

March 15, 2020

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

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

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

With COVID-19 now a pandemic and confirmed cases increasing in New Jersey and across the country, it is imperative that we take all appropriate actions to increase access to screening, testing, and treatment related to COVID-19. While I have coordinated across state agencies to take emergency action to facilitate access to screening, testing and access to care for the uninsured or underinsured in New Jersey, more can be done to ensure every individual has access to appropriate health care during this crisis. Therefore, as New Jersey transitions from a State Based Exchange on the Federal Platform to a State Based Exchange, I respectfully urge the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to authorize a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) in New Jersey to allow individuals to access affordable health insurance options through the federal platform.

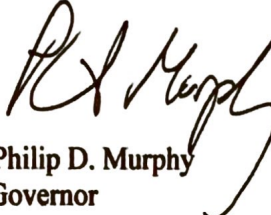
On March 9, 2020, I declared a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency across all 21 counties in New Jersey, allowing state agencies and departments to utilize state resources to assist affected communities responding to and recovering from COVID-19 cases. At my direction, several state departments acted to mitigate the spread of the virus and increase access to screening, testing, and testing-related services related to COVID-19, including requiring the waiver of consumer cost sharing for all medically necessary COVID-19 testing. In order to remove any potential remaining barriers to testing and treatment, it is imperative for New Jersey residents to have access to an SEP so uninsured and underinsured individuals can enroll in health insurance.

I urge you to provide for a SEP of at least 60 days for all eligible uninsured and underinsured persons to purchase health coverage through the federal platform, and for that coverage to be in place as soon as possible.

With no vaccine in place and a high degree of uncertainty about the direction that the virus will take, increasing access to health coverage will play a role in managing this outbreak. Similar to actions CMS has taken in the past during major weather events such as hurricanes, creating a SEP is a responsible action that will benefit individuals, as well as, contribute to the management

of a public health crisis. Thank you for your attention to this important and emergent issue as we work to secure the health and safety of all New Jersey residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. D. Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Philip D. Murphy  
Governor