

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 21, 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
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

We write to elevate and express our support for the letter sent by Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) Director Anita Fox on October 14, 2020, urging you to extend the open enrollment period for the 2021 Health Insurance Marketplace through the end of January 2021.

The letter sent by Governor Whitmer and DIFS Director Fox highlighted the importance of federal action to help connect individuals in our state with an affordable health insurance plan and access to health care. Although the state is taking every step possible with their authorities through the Medicaid program and outreach to the commercial insurance market, many Michiganders still face barriers to gaining access to the federally run Health Insurance Marketplace and potential federal subsidies that will help them afford coverage. Barriers to health care during a pandemic limit our ability to mitigate the transmission and to ensure those infected have access to proper treatment.

We have repeatedly requested that you open a special enrollment period for individuals to gain insurance on the federally run exchanges during the COVID-19 public health emergency. As you know, Michigan is one of the majority of states that rely on Healthcare.gov to offer insurance options to our constituents as well as the ability to qualify for premium assistance. It is critical that families have a sufficient period of time to navigate and acquire health insurance through the marketplace—particularly as the regularly scheduled enrollment period will start 9 months after you declared the COVID-19 pandemic a public health emergency while simultaneously denying uninsured Michiganders the option to enroll in a health care plan through Healthcare.gov.

We echo the request by Governor Whitmer and DIFS Director Fox that you help Michiganders gain health coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace and extend the upcoming enrollment period through January 2021.

Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator