



HHS Again Renews COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration

October 2021

On October 15, 2021, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Xavier Becerra again renewed the public health emergency (PHE) declaration. The renewal extends the PHE for another 90 days, effective October 18, 2021, although the Secretary has the right to terminate the declaration prior to its expiration date.

The PHE Declaration

The Secretary has the authority to declare a PHE under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act. COVID-19 was initially declared an emergency on January 31, 2020. This is the seventh 90-day renewal.

What the PHE Renewal Means for Employers

The PHE renewal means employer group health plans must continue to provide COVID-19 testing at no cost in- and out-of-network and paid before the deductible is met in a health savings account-qualified high-deductible health plan. The PHE renewal does not affect deadlines for COBRA elections, HIPAA special enrollment rights, or ERISA claims and appeals, which are in effect until the end of the Outbreak Period, determined by the National Emergency declared by President Biden.

What Employers Should Do Now

Employers should continue to administer plans in accordance with the COVID-19-related provisions noted above and monitor the HHS website for early termination or an additional extension of the PHE declaration in January.

Resources

The Renewal of the PHE Declaration is available [here](#).



About Aon:

[Aon plc](#) (NYSE: AON) exists to shape decisions for the better — to protect and enrich the lives of people around the world. Our colleagues provide our clients in over 120 countries with advice and solutions that give them the clarity and confidence to make better decisions to protect and grow their business.

Follow Aon on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Stay up-to-date by visiting the [Aon Newsroom](#) and sign up for News Alerts [here](#).