



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

To the Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic. This is an unprecedented public health emergency and one that requires leaders at all levels of government to mobilize and coordinate responses that will protect public health.

This week I declared a state of emergency for the State of Michigan to maximize all efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep Michiganders safe. I write today to urge you to direct the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to establish a special enrollment period for federally-facilitated health insurance Marketplaces and to reduce the red tape individuals face when trying to enroll in coverage to increase Michiganders' access to comprehensive health insurance during this state of emergency.

CMS has established special enrollment periods in the past for a variety of extraordinary circumstances, in times of natural disaster, or to respond to more personal situations such as house fires or domestic violence. COVID-19 is an imminent threat to the health and welfare of all Michiganders. These are extraordinary circumstances where access to health care and health insurance is critical to limiting the impact and spread of the outbreak.

There are approximately 28 million uninsured people in the United States, and over half a million in Michigan alone. We know that the uninsured are less likely to seek medical care. Impacted Michiganders without health insurance may find themselves in bankruptcy if they become critically ill. Caring for uninsured patients will impose a severe strain on an already burdened health care industry. Providing enhanced access to health insurance during this state of emergency will make the difference between life and death for uninsured people, their families, and the people with whom they come into contact.

I urge you to provide for a special enrollment period of 60 days for all eligible uninsured persons to purchase health coverage through the Marketplace, and for that coverage to be in place as soon as April 1.

These exceptional circumstances require a comprehensive response to assure health coverage for as many citizens as possible. I welcome the opportunity to partner on this vital effort to provide this additional opportunity for enrollment in Michigan's Health Insurance Marketplace.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor of Michigan