

Eli's Hospice Insider

Hospice News: Feds Announce Another PHE Extension, With Many More Expected

Before stepping down, HHS Secretary **Alex Azar** extended the COVID-19 public health emergency for the fourth time. Azar previously extended the PHE in April, July, and October of 2020. The PHE allows for regulatory leniency and other considerations.

That probably won't be the last PHE extension, by a long shot.



"To assure you of our commitment to the ongoing response, we have determined that the PHE will likely remain in place for the entirety of 2021," HHS acting secretary **Norris Cochran** said in a Jan. 22 letter to state governors. "When a decision is made to terminate the declaration or let it expire, HHS will provide states with 60 days' notice prior to termination."

The letter specifically mentioned telemedicine as a tool to increase access to healthcare during a PHE. "Predictability and stability are important given the foundation and flexibilities ... that are tied to the designation of the PHE," Cochran said.