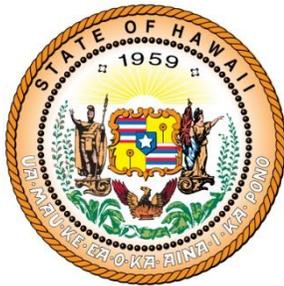
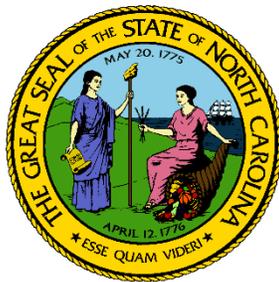


HAWAII



NORTH CAROLINA



OREGON



VIRGINIA



December 13, 2017

The Honorable Eric D. Hargan
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington D.C.

Dear Acting Secretary Hargan:

We are writing to request a week long extension of the Open Enrollment period for states using HealthCare.gov. During both the third and fourth Open Enrollment periods, the December 15 deadline for coverage starting on January 1 was extended due to high consumer demand that jeopardized the consumer experience.

A surge in enrollments during the final days before the deadline meant the call center could not answer all the calls in a timely fashion and the website used waiting rooms -- requiring people to wait in line to complete an application on the site. This year, the elimination of both the January 15 and January 31 deadlines will shift more enrollments to the December 15 deadline than ever before. Additionally, the compressed enrollment period is likely to create additional pressure in the final week. It is very likely that the call center will be overwhelmed and the website will once again require waiting rooms to keep up with consumer demand, as we have already seen with the waiting room reportedly being implemented already this year.

Extensions have played a very important role in helping people who had trouble or could not get through enrollment in past years. During both of the last extensions, between 400,000 to 450,000 additional enrollments, or 6-8% of total enrollment and 10-11% of new enrollments, occurred during the two additional business days allowed for enrollment.

As governors, we have a responsibility to look out for the health and wellbeing of our constituents. We believe an extension of the Open Enrollment deadline is a reasonable step that will have a beneficial impact and request that your administration take action to implement it.

Sincerely,

David Y. Ige
Governor, Hawaii

Roy Cooper
Governor, North Carolina

Kate Brown
Governor, Oregon

Terry McAuliffe
Governor, Virginia

cc:

CMS Administrator Seema Verma
CMS Deputy Administrator Randy Pate