

IMPORTANT COVID-19 UPDATE

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY EXTENDED TO OCTOBER 23RD

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has [extended the public health emergency](#) declared for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As a result of the continued consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was announced that the public health emergency (PHE) first declared January 31 and set to expire on July 25, will last for another 90 days, through October 23, 2020. In general, the declaration of the PHE enables the government to offer benefits and relief to companies and employees who are directly suffering from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

Employee benefits and health coverage are areas that have received some form of financial or compliance relief due to COVID-19. Examples include extended time for plans to furnish certain notices and disclosures required by ERISA so long as they make a good faith effort to furnish the documents as soon as administratively practicable, and substantial changes to health plan timelines and deadlines, such as for HIPAA special enrollment periods and COBRA elections.

Due to the urgent need to help facilitate the nation's response to the PHE posed by COVID-19, the agencies have adopted temporary policies to provide relief during the PHE in connection with certain health benefit coverage and access standards under employer provided group benefit plans. For more on this relief, see these DOL consumer-focused [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) on health benefit and retirement benefit issues, and this [FAQ](#) issued by HHS, the DOL and the Department of the Treasury on health coverage requirements for testing and diagnostic services under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act ([FFCRA](#)) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ([CARES Act](#)).

Conner Strong & Buckelew will provide alerts and updates as new information becomes available. Please contact your Conner Strong & Buckelew account representative toll-free at 1-877-861-3220 with any questions. For a complete list of Legislative Updates issued by Conner Strong & Buckelew, visit our online [Resource Center](#).

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