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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Secretary Azar Declares Public Health Emergency for United States for 2019 Novel Coronavirus

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the entire United States to aid the nation's healthcare community in responding to 2019 novel [coronavirus](#).

"While this virus poses a serious public health threat, the risk to the American public remains low at this time, and we are working to keep this risk low," Secretary Azar said. "We are committed to protecting the health and safety of all Americans, and this public health emergency declaration is the latest in the series of steps the Trump Administration has taken to protect our country."

The emergency declaration gives state, tribal, and local health departments more flexibility to request that HHS authorize them to temporarily reassign state, local, and tribal personnel to respond to 2019-nCoV if their salaries normally are funded in whole or in part by Public Health Service Act programs. These personnel could assist with public health information campaigns and other response activities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working closely with state health departments on disease surveillance, contact tracing, and providing interim guidance for clinicians on identifying and treating coronavirus infections. HHS is working with the Department of State to assist in bringing home Americans who had been living in affected areas of mainland China. HHS divisions also are collaborating with industry to identify and move forward with development of potential diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics to detect, prevent, and treat 2019-nCoV infections.

In declaring the [public health emergency](#), Secretary Azar acted within his authority under the Public Health Service Act. This declaration is retroactive to January 27, 2020.

This U.S. public health emergency declaration follows a declaration by the World Health Organization that spread of the virus constituted a public health emergency of international concern.

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*Secretary Azar signs the Public Health
Emergency Declaration*

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