



**Troy D. Jackson**  
President of the Senate

**129<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature**

**Sara Gideon**  
Speaker of the House

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma:

As the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads throughout Maine and the country, we write to you to express our concern regarding access to affordable health care. Maine, like 37 other states, offers Affordable Care Act-qualified health coverage to individuals only during enrollment periods available through the federal health care marketplace. As we encourage Mainers to stay healthy, seek preventative care, and respond quickly to any symptoms of COVID-19 to stop its spread, we ask that the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services work to establish a special enrollment period for qualified health plans offered through [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) so everyone can access quality health care without fear of the cost.

Despite recently expanding Maine's Medicaid program, approximately 105,000 Maine residents remain uninsured. This includes approximately 51,000 lower-income individuals who may qualify for subsidies to make health coverage affordable. The uninsured population likely also includes many younger, healthier individuals who may have chosen not to obtain coverage or who have insufficient coverage through a limited benefit short term health plan. Unfortunately, young and healthy individuals are contracting COVID-19 at alarming rates; we should be doing everything we can to encourage these individuals and all Mainers to seek care before symptoms of this disease or other health conditions become too severe for our scarce health care resources to accommodate.

The COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on the Maine economy while we close businesses, public spaces, and otherwise implement social distancing measures to keep people safe and healthy. Please help us minimize the impacts on our economy and our health by giving our residents the opportunity to access health care and contain the spread of COVID-19 without fear of incurring medical bills they can least afford at this difficult time.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter. We strongly urge you to reconsider your recent decision not to reopen enrollment and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sen. Troy Jackson  
Senate President

Rep. Sara Gideon  
Speaker of the House

Sen. Nate Libby  
Senate Majority Leader

Rep. Matt Moonen  
House Majority Leader

Sen. Eloise Vitelli  
Senate Asst. Majority Leader

Rep. Ryan Fecteau  
House Asst. Majority Leader

Sen. Shenna Bellows  
Sen. Cathy Breen  
Sen. Michael Carpenter  
Sen. Brownie Carson  
Sen. Justin Chenette  
Sen. Ben Chipman  
Sen. Ned Claxton  
Sen. Bill Diamond  
Sen. Susan Deschambault  
Sen. Jim Dill  
Sen. Geoffrey Gratiwck  
Sen. Erin Herbig  
Sen. Mark Lawrence  
Sen. Louis Luchini  
Sen. Rebecca Millett  
Sen. David Miramant  
Sen. Heather Sanborn  
Sen. Linda Sanborn  
Rep. Robert Alley  
Rep. Betty Austin  
Rep. Chris Babbidge  
Rep. Shawn Babine  
Rep. Donna Bailey  
Rep. Pinny Beebe-Center  
Rep. Seth Berry  
Rep. Lydia Blume  
Rep. Michael Brennan  
Rep. Mark Bryant  
Rep. Chris Caiazzo  
Rep. Anne Carney  
Rep. Kristen Cloutier

Rep. Ben Collings  
Rep. Janice Cooper  
Rep. Margaret Craven  
Rep. Ed Crockett  
Rep. Scott Cuddy  
Rep. Mattie Daughtry  
Rep. Diane Denk  
Rep. Mick Devin  
Rep. Jan Dodge  
Rep. Donna Doore  
Rep. Vicki Doudera  
Rep. Dick Farnsworth  
Rep. Jess Fay  
Rep. Victoria Foley  
Rep. Drew Gattine  
Rep. Lori Gramlich  
Rep. Nicole Grohoski  
Rep. Jim Handy  
Rep. Thom Harnett  
Rep. Allison Hepler  
Rep. Craig Hickman  
Rep. Dan Hobbs  
Rep. Brian Hubbell  
Rep. Patty Hymanson  
Rep. Henry Ingwersen  
Rep. Chris Kessler  
Rep. Tori Kornfield  
Rep. Scott Landry  
Rep. Colleen Madigan  
Rep. John Martin  
Rep. Danny Martin

Rep. Anne-Marie Mastraccio  
Rep. Ann Matlack  
Rep. Chloe Maxmin  
Rep. Dave McCrea  
Rep. Jay McCreight  
Rep. Genevieve McDonald  
Rep. Gina Melaragno  
Rep. Victoria Morales  
Rep. Steve Moriarty  
Rep. Catherine Nadeau  
Rep. Kevin O'Connell  
Rep. Maggie O'Neil  
Rep. Sean Paulhus  
Rep. Sarah Pebworth  
Rep. Anne Perry  
Rep. Joe Perry  
Rep. Lois Reckitt  
Rep. Tina Riley  
Rep. Tiffany Roberts  
Rep. Deane Rykerson  
Rep. John Schneck  
Rep. Bettyann Sheats  
Rep. Steve Stanley  
Rep. Holly Stover  
Rep. Rachel Talbot Ross  
Rep. Denise Tepler  
Rep. Ryan Tipping  
Rep. Ralph Tucker  
Rep. Charlotte Warren  
Rep. Bruce White