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## PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY EXTENDED

On January 7, 2021, the HHS Secretary extended the public health emergency declaration for the COVID-19 pandemic. It was scheduled to expire on January 20, but will now extend to April 20 and possibly later if extended again.

With the extension of the declared public health emergency, the requirement from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) requiring plan to cover COVID-19 testing with cost sharing or medical management techniques is also extended. Under the FFCRA, plans are required to cover COVID-19 testing and certain related items and services without cost-sharing until the end of the declared public health emergency.

This extension also extends the requirements on how plans cover the COVID-19 vaccine. In particular, it extends the requirement that non-grandfathered plan cover the vaccine without cost-sharing whether it is provided in or out of network, and whether or not it is recommended for routine use. After the end of the public health emergency, vaccines must only be covered in-network and if recommended for routine use.

Note that the public health emergency is separate from the declared national emergency for COVID-19, which is also on-going. The Timeline Extension Rule is tied to the national emergency, while the testing coverage requirement is tied to the public health emergency.

The text of the public health emergency extension is available here:  
<https://www.phe.gov/emergency/news/healthactions/phe/Pages/covid19-07Jan2021.aspx>

**Source: SPBA**

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