

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
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AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2104

December 16, 2019

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

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

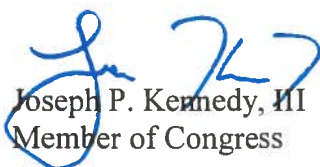
Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding widespread outages and glitches on the healthcare.gov website on December 15, 2019, the last day of health care open enrollment. According to reports, numerous consumers in 38 states faced at least two online outages and login pages would not load. Additionally, many consumers faced confusing redirection to a "waiting room" or were directed to call a listed number that only accepted voicemail messages due to high call volumes. At the height of the open enrollment period, these technical failures and unprepared responses are simply unacceptable.

As approximately 100,000 Americans were impacted by these glitches and prevented from signing-up for health care coverage, I demand an immediate extension of the open enrollment period until at least December 23, 2019 and a coordinated public information campaign to spread awareness about this extension. I also encourage you to retract a misleading statement provided to the press claiming that the website "remain[ed] open for business" and instead redirect your attention to immediately acknowledge and address these outages and glitches. Despite your failures to adhere to it under this Administration, the mission of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services remains to extend and provide the highest quality health care to as many Americans as possible. Failure to remedy this catastrophe and prolong this deadline is nothing short of a failure to follow your mission.

I look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,


Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress