

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 10, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Azar:

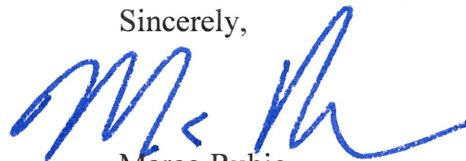
Thank you for your continued leadership in response to Hurricane Florence, and your efforts to protect Americans in Florida and elsewhere from Hurricane Michael. Your department's efforts are critical to ensuring a rapid, effective response that will save lives.

To that end, I respectfully ask that you continue to coordinate with state and local governments to ensure they are prepared and able to quickly respond to Floridians once Michael passes. As requested with previous storms, I would appreciate updates about ongoing coordination with health care providers, including hospitals, inpatient nursing facilities, dialysis centers, and home health providers. Specifically, has the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' distributed information about best practices for evacuating vulnerable patients, if needed, and how to provide necessary medical services to patients that are not evacuated? Additionally, what steps have been taken to prevent tragic deaths, such as the loss of seniors at the Hollywood Hills, Florida nursing home?

Additionally, I respectfully request your department to expedite the review of, and to the extent possible, approve any waivers requested by the State of Florida under Sections 1135 or 1812 of the Social Security Act that will ensure emergency response teams have the tools and flexibilities necessary in the wake of the hurricane. In light of this, I also request an update on any pending communications regarding enrolling out-of-state providers to ensure that Floridians enrolled in Medicaid are able to access care in another state, if forced to evacuate.

I look forward to working with you to ensure Florida is prepared to respond to the effects of Hurricane Michael. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator