

March 13, 2020

## President Declares National Emergency in Response to Coronavirus Outbreak

As [urged by the AHA](#), President Trump today [declared a national emergency](#) in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

**“We thank the President and the Administration for taking the urgent and necessary step today of declaring a national emergency,”** AHA President and CEO Rick Pollack said in a [statement](#). **“This action will break down regulatory barriers to allow hospitals and health systems to respond in an innovative, timely and decisive manner with the essential tools and resources to care for patients and communities.”**

The declaration paves the way for the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary to take critical actions, such as providing Section 1135 waivers, to ensure that health care services and sufficient health care items are available to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak

Among other actions, the declaration would allow for waivers of:

- The skilled nursing facility three-day qualifying hospital stay requirement for beneficiaries, which would allow SNF coverage in the absence of a hospital stay, making inpatient beds available for more seriously ill patients.
- Critical access hospitals' limitation of 25 inpatient beds and the 96-hour length of stay limitation. This is crucial for rural areas that may not have other options for inpatient beds.
- Requirements that physicians and other health care professionals be licensed in a state in which they are providing services, so long as they have equivalent licensing in another state for Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance participants.

Visit the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services webpage for [information about waiver authority](#), and what [emergency and disaster-related policies and procedures may be implemented](#) with an 1135 waiver.