



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

January 12, 2021

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As a result of the change in Administration, please accept my resignation as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), effective noon, January 20, 2021. It has been the greatest professional privilege and honor of my life to serve as Secretary, and I thank you for the opportunity to serve the American people.

I have been entrusted with leading HHS through an unprecedented pandemic. Drawing on my leadership of pandemic flu preparedness efforts during my earlier tenure at HHS and subsequent experience in the private sector, we created a historic partnership with the Department of Defense, our scientists, and the pharmaceutical industry to bring therapeutics and vaccines to the American people in record time. Operation Warp Speed achieved in nine months what many doubted would be possible in a year and a half or more. As of this date, we have two safe and effective vaccines being administered to millions of Americans, with more vaccines likely to be authorized shortly. We have two safe and effective therapeutics that can help keep the vulnerable out of our hospitals, with more therapies on the way. These efforts have been characterized by *The New York Times* as “remarkably effective” and in *The Washington Post* as “staggeringly impressive.” While we mourn every lost life, our early, aggressive, and comprehensive efforts saved hundreds of thousands or even millions of American lives.

Our remarkable response to the pandemic should not overshadow the many other successful efforts HHS has undertaken over the last three years, which I focused on facilitating patient-centered healthcare markets, protecting life and lives, and promoting independence over dependence in our safety-net programs.

We developed and implemented an inspiring vision for healthcare: a patient-centric, affordable, personalized system. As I laid out at the start of my tenure, we are completely changing how we pay for healthcare in the United States by moving toward paying for health and outcomes rather than sickness and procedures. We have made health information personal and portable. We have transformed the pharmaceutical marketplace, driving down drug prices through the comprehensive strategy laid out in the *American Patients First* blueprint. We brought price and quality transparency to healthcare services, putting the patient at the center of our system, and required that prescription drug discounts be passed on to patients at the pharmacy counter. We have made health insurance more affordable and created more options for Americans to finance their care. We have saved billions of dollars and millions of hours of healthcare providers’ time through unprecedented regulatory reform.

We made important advances against the opioid crisis through a comprehensive, science- and evidence-based approach that centered on combating stigma and promoting medication-assisted treatment. We launched a historic effort to end the HIV epidemic in America by 2030. We are tackling maternal mortality and gaps in rural healthcare, and we have brought more change to American kidney care in a few years than it has seen in a few decades. We protected our nation against numerous infectious disease threats, such as Ebola, influenza, and measles, and led global efforts to protect public health. We got e-cigarettes out of the hands of our children. We have championed efforts to protect the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death and protected religious liberty and conscience, while ensuring equal access to health and human services programs. We worked to restore the focus of human services programs as enablers of independence, dignity, and work, taking advantage of one of the strongest labor markets our country has ever seen. We have delivered new access to treatment for those suffering from serious mental illness.

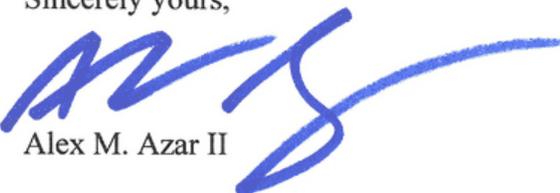
The reforms we put in place are the most consequential changes to how healthcare is financed and delivered since Medicare and Medicaid were enacted. Thanks to your willingness to take on all of the entrenched special interests in healthcare, we have put the patient truly at the center of the system, with the potential for the first time in 55 years to have a competitive system of healthcare in which quality goes up and prices go down.

Unfortunately, the actions and rhetoric following the election, especially during this past week, threaten to tarnish these and other historic legacies of this Administration. The attacks on the Capitol were an assault on our democracy and on the tradition of peaceful transitions of power that the United States of America first brought to the world. I implore you to continue to condemn unequivocally any form of violence, to demand that no one attempt to disrupt the inaugural activities in Washington or elsewhere, and to continue to support unreservedly the peaceful and orderly transition of power on January 20, 2021.

With the pandemic raging, the continued need to deliver vaccines and therapeutics to the American people, and the imperative of ensuring a smooth transition to the Biden Administration, I have determined that it is in the best interest of the people we serve to remain as Secretary until the end of the term.

Please allow me to conclude by thanking the more than 85,000 men and women at the Department of Health and Human Services. Over the past two decades, I have had the great privilege to work with and lead these public servants, who are so committed to enhancing and protecting the health and well-being of every American. If I have left this Department that I love a better place than I found it, I shall count my tenure a success.

Sincerely yours,



Alex M. Azar II