

WHO Declares End of COVID-19 Global Health Emergency

On May 5, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a global health emergency after three years.

WHO officials explained that although COVID-19 continues to spread and evolve, its threat at a global level is now at a much lower level of concern. They stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over—just the emergency phase is.

“Epidemiologically, this virus will continue to cause waves. What we are hopeful of is that we have the tools in place to ensure that the future waves do not result in more severe disease, don’t result in waves of death, and we can do that with the tools we have at hand.”

- *Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO’s COVID-19 technical lead*

WHO data shows there have been more than 765 million confirmed COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic, with nearly 7 million resulting in death. From a global perspective, Europe has the most confirmed cases, but the United States has reported the most deaths. In fact, 1 in 6 COVID-19 deaths have occurred in the United States.

What’s Next?

The removal of the WHO’s designation is a significant milestone, although it doesn’t impact the United States’ public health emergency. The declaration is symbolic of the pandemic’s end at a global level. However, the WHO International Health Regulations Emergency Committee members said they wouldn’t hesitate to convene another meeting and declare a global health emergency again for COVID-19 if there is a significant rise in cases or deaths. The reality is that COVID-19 still spreads across the nation and the globe.

Employers should continue to monitor the situation closely and encourage the use of public health measures and tools, such as vaccines and boosters. OneDigital will keep you apprised of notable pandemic changes.