

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

December 5, 2013

The Honorable Gene Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) mission is to protect public health and provide essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. HHS is responsible for almost a quarter of all federal outlays, and it administers more grant dollars than all other federal agencies combined. HHS' Medicare program is the nation's largest health insurer, handling more than 1 billion claims per year. Medicare and Medicaid together provide health care insurance for one in four Americans. The agency also is responsible for administering the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM) as outlined under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA).

HHS administers its programs through a number of component agencies that include Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and National Institutes of Health (NIH). These agencies rely extensively on computer systems and networks to conduct operations, process transactions, account for assets, deliver services to constituents, and communicate with individuals and organizations. HHS and its component agencies also collect, process, and maintain highly sensitive information including proprietary business information, medical records, and personally identifiable information. Such sensitive information is used by these agencies to deliver services to citizens, including approving drugs for market, providing health insurance benefits, monitoring pandemics and disease outbreaks, and conducting medical research. Consequently, significant harm to public health and safety could result if the agencies' computer systems, networks, and information are not adequately protected against cyber threats. Increasingly sophisticated cyber threats have underscored the need to manage and bolster the information security of the department's key systems and networks.

Accordingly, we write to request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the information security controls over key computer networks at HHS agencies – CMS, FDA, CDC, and NIH – and assess their effectiveness in protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of each agency's information and information systems. In light of the number of

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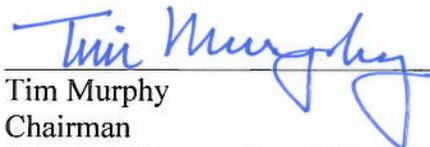
agencies involved, we ask that you work with staff to prioritize the work, beginning with an examination of CMS-related information security programs.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. Please work with Mr. Carl Anderson or Mr. Peter Spencer of the Majority Committee Staff at (202) 225-2927 on the specifics of your evaluation.

Sincerely,



Fred Upton  
Chairman



Tim Murphy  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations



Joseph R. Pitts  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health

cc: The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Ranking Member

The Honorable Diana DeGette, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

The Honorable Frank Pallone Jr., Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health