

Eli's Hospice Insider

Industry Note: Lawmakers Demand Tougher Hospice Surveys

CMS should draw up a list of hospices for expanded scrutiny, letter urges.

Hopes that two recent reports from a government watchdog agency would fade away without much result may be dashed by a recent letter from prominent members of Congress.

House Ways and Means Committee Chair **Richard Neal** (D-Massachusetts) and Ranking Member **Kevin Brady** (R-Texas) sent a July 30 letter to **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** Administrator **Seema Verma** demanding details on how CMS is addressing the problems revealed in two recent **HHS Office of Inspector General** reports.

Reminder: The OIG reports listed a variety of problems surrounding surveys and substandard care, and profiled case study horror stories including a patient whose feeding tube insertion site developed maggots (see Eli's HCW, Vol. 12, No. 8).

Among the many questions the lawmakers asked Verma were how CMS plans to increase its oversight of so-called poor performers with a history of serious deficiencies; whether CMS may implement a program equivalent to skilled nursing facilities' Special Focus Facility Program that targets SNFs with a record of poor care quality; and how CMS plans to make it easier for patients and others to report quality of care problems.

The **National Association for Home Care & Hospice** is developing a "series of recommendations to reform the hospice survey process" and plans to address the issue with law- and policy makers proactively, the trade group indicates in its member newsletter.

The **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization** supports increased oversight, but it must be "smart oversight," NHPCO President **Edo Banach** says in a statement.

Resource: Access the four-page letter via a link at <https://waysandmeans.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/neal-and-brady-demand-information-medicare-hospice-deficiencies>.