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# Congress of the United States

## U.S. House of Representatives

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December 17, 2019

Ms. Joanne Chiedi  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Inspector General  
330 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Inspector General Chiedi:

I write regarding the troubling problems that have recently caused significant technical difficulties for consumers navigating the HealthCare.gov and Medicare.gov websites. The stewardship of these websites by agency leadership is a core mission of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Both HHS and CMS are responsible for dozens of contracts awarding hundreds of millions of dollars to private companies operating these websites. Recent technological failures suggest that the management of the HealthCare.gov and Medicare.gov websites and the conduct of the relevant contractors requires further attention.

Medicare Plan Finder is an interactive website operated by CMS that serves as an important resource for Medicare beneficiaries to compare Medicare coverage options, most notably Part D prescription drug plans. It is the most used tool on Medicare.gov. Last year, Medicare Plan Finder was redesigned for the first time since it was developed in 2005. According to press reports, development of the redesigned tool cost roughly \$11 million.<sup>1</sup> Various complaints indicate that the recently overhauled Medicare Plan Finder is confusing, generated incorrect results, and inadvertently led beneficiaries to select plans with lower premiums but higher overall costs.

HealthCare.gov is an online marketplace that allows millions of consumers to compare and enroll in private insurance plans. There has been substantial turnover among the private contractors in charge of running HealthCare.gov. Over the weekend, widespread glitches affected HealthCare.gov on the last day to sign up for marketplace plans with coverage effective January

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<sup>1</sup> ProPublica, *The \$11 Million Dollar Medicare Tool That Gives Seniors the Wrong Insurance Information* (Nov. 25, 2019), <https://www.propublica.org/article/the-11-million-dollar-medicare-tool-that-gives-seniors-the-wrong-insurance-information>

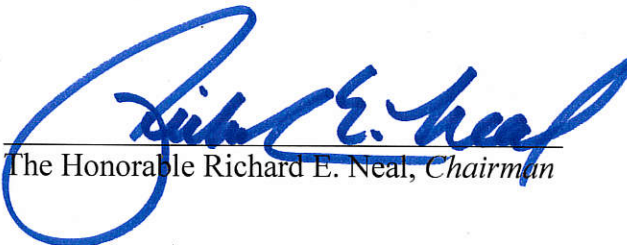
1, 2020. The final days of open enrollment are the busiest, and as such it is of the utmost importance for the website to be operating smoothly for individuals seeking to enroll at that time.

Consumers should not end up in the wrong plan or be blocked from even signing up due to mismanagement of major government websites. Therefore, I ask that you conduct a review regarding the ongoing management of contracts related to enrollment through HealthCare.gov and comparison through the Medicare Plan Finder. I ask that your review include the following:

- 1) The process involved in awarding new contracts to manage HealthCare.gov enrollment and the Medicare Plan Finder redesign;
- 2) The number of and nature of contracts awarded to manage HealthCare.gov enrollment and the Medicare Plan Finder redesign;
- 3) Agency oversight regarding the relevant HealthCare.gov and Medicare Plan Finder contractors; and
- 4) Internal agency documents, such as management reports, corrective action strategies, and internal correspondence concerning the responses to the problems identified in this letter.

I appreciate your prompt and thorough review of these issues.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Richard E. Neal, *Chairman*