

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20410

Dear President Trump,

We write to raise our serious concerns with Seema Verma's professional judgement and demand you take swift action and immediately remove and replace her as the Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

After a 15 month Inspector General (IG) investigation, it has now been proven that Verma has consistently shown a lack of good judgement when it comes to responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.¹ She has defied rules, skirted regulations, violated trust, misled Congress, and she must be replaced.

The investigation showed that Verma used CMS dollars for personal service contracts under the guise of communication service contracts.² She had one employee of the public relations firm Porter Novelli, who is also a personal friend of Verma's, do her private bidding to arrange a meeting with an editor of Women's Day Magazine, organize interviews with USA Today, and assist in securing an invite to a "Girls Night Out" event hosted by a CBS correspondent.³

Besides arranging contracts with personal friends to raise her profile and thus misspending CMS dollars, the IG investigation identified additional hundreds of thousands of "questionable costs" all associated with reckless spending.⁴ She has put the agency at risk of fraud and abuse and therefore she has put the public in jeopardy.

In October 2019, in response to questions from members of Congress at the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Verma testified under oath that "all of the contracts that we have at CMS are based on promoting the work of CMS."⁵ However, this investigation directly contradicts the Administrator's testimony.

Verma has grossly misused CMS funding, has reliably prioritized herself over the American people, and it is now clear she lied under oath.

In early December 2019, members of Congress sent a letter requesting Verma be removed and replaced after reports came out that Verma filed a claim for lost property for over \$47,000 in

¹ <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region12/121920003.pdf>

² Id.

³ Id.

⁴ Id.

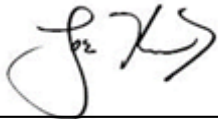
⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OT-egpXPGno&feature=emb_title

August.⁶ This was the latest in a long string of reporting that showed a complete ineptitude to oversee government spending. Previous reporting indicated that Verma had misused CMS dollars to develop a detailed plan to raise her public image by granting interviews to Glamour, Women’s Day, and securing her position on a “Power Women” list.⁷ Additionally, Verma used her title as CMS Administrator to secure contracts to help garner invitations to exclusive events, such as her attendance at the Kennedy Center Honors.⁸

The IG report concludes that Verma has disregarded Federal regulations in three ways: “(1) CMS allowed a subcontractor individual to perform inherently governmental functions, (2) CMS administered service contracts as personal services contracts, and (3) CMS’s administration of these contracts put the Government at increased risk for waste and abuse.”⁹ Verma must be held accountable for her actions, for her complete lack of judgement, and for putting herself over the needs of all Americans who rely critical CMS services.

For someone who claims they want to reduce CMS spending, including reining in fraud and abuse, Verma has spent an exorbitant amount of tax payer dollars for personal use, all to the detriment of CMS beneficiaries and the public. We demand your immediate attention to our concerns and remove Administrator Verma from her post without delay.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/s/

André Carson
Member of Congress



Marc Veasy
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

⁶ Id.

⁷ Id.; https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/top-trump-health-official-spent-3-million-on-consultants-who-helped-boost-her-visibility/2019/11/20/67c342c2-0ae8-11ea-97ac-a7ccc8dd1ebc_story.html

⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/12/07/medicare-chief-asked-taxpayers-to-cover-stolen-jewelry-077761>

⁹ <https://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region12/121920003.pdf>