

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
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SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0923

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

- 2353 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1313
FAX: (202) 225-1171
- 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD
SUITE 200
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800
FAX: (954) 735-9444

www.alceehastings.house.gov

July 09, 2013

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I write in regards to the implementation of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Health Care Act* (ACA). As you know, the ACA created the Navigator grant program as a means of assisting individuals enrolled in health care coverage through Marketplace exchanges. To that end, the Department of Health and Human Services (the Department) published a funding opportunity on April 9, 2013, to fund Navigators in anticipation of the implementation of federal and state insurance exchanges. The application period closed on June 7, 2013.

Regulations instruct that Navigators will conduct education and outreach activities, as well as provide information to individuals and the communities in which they operate. However, the Department has yet to select awardees for the Navigator grants. Nevertheless, the Federal Health Insurance Market Place launches on October 1, 2013. Thus, I am concerned that there may be a lack of timely information concerning the mechanics and requirements of the ACA. Furthermore, the training and qualification requirements necessary for organizations selected as Navigators may impede those organizations' ability to swiftly deploy in the community.

To provide some clarification on the above issues, I would appreciate answers and responses to the following questions:

1. Aside from the Navigators program, how else does the Department plan to undertake community based outreach in states?
2. When will the Department announce the Navigator grant award selections?
3. Does the Department anticipate other funding opportunities for community based organizations that wish to assist in the implementation of the ACA?
4. How will the Department ensure that Navigator organizations recruit and employ people representative of the communities they serve?

5. For the purposes of the Navigator program, how does the Department define a community or service area boundary wise? Does the Department anticipate Navigator organizations covering multiple communities?

In addition, I would like to request a meeting as soon as possible with your good offices, to discuss the aforementioned questions and concerns. Madam Secretary, despite the fact that the Department has continued to implement the ACA, the general public and even community based organizations still have many questions regarding various aspects of the law. I believe that this information gap must be corrected in an extremely timely manner.

I look forward to hearing back from you on this important request. Thank you for your consideration. With warm regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress