

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 26, 2020

Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Room 445-G
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma:

As members of the Los Angeles Congressional delegation, we write regarding deeply disturbing reports of nursing facilities inappropriately discharging patients – many who are disabled or older adults – to homeless shelters, run-down motels and other unsafe facilities putting their health and safety at risk.

As you are likely aware, on Sunday, June 21, the *New York Times* reported¹ that a facility in Los Angeles discharged a patient to an “unregulated boardinghouse — without bothering to inform his family.” The patient reportedly ended up on the street and later in jail. According to reports, the nursing home instructed staff members to “clear out less-profitable residents to make room for a new class of customers who would generate more revenue: patients with Covid-19.” If reports are true, these actions are immoral and unscrupulous.

Nursing homes across the country are at the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Los Angeles County, for example, nursing home residents account for roughly half of all COVID-19 deaths. Broadly speaking, the Administration’s response has failed to mitigate these alarming trends.

Unfortunately, inappropriate discharges are neither unique nor new.² This particular facility had a history of regulatory issues and poor star ratings; however, other reports, coupled with longstanding program incentives, mean that issue is more widespread than just this particular facility. Nonetheless, this particular report, in the midst of Los Angeles’ ongoing homelessness crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic, is particularly and uniquely damning.

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/21/business/nursing-homes-evictions-discharges-coronavirus.html>

² For example, see: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/2016/12/21/32cf18ae-c7c8-11e6-8bee-54e800ef2a63_story.html

With that in mind, we understand that Chairman Neal has requested that you investigate this troubling trend.³ We fully support that request, and further request that you undertake an investigation of this particular incident and similar reports at the facility, as well other instances of inappropriate discharge into homelessness.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Co-Signed:

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Tony Cárdenas
Judy Chu
Ted W. Lieu
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Adam B. Schiff
Maxine Waters