

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Ranking Member Yvette Clarke

Hearing on “Protecting Patients and Safeguarding Taxpayer Dollars: The Role of CMS in Combatting Medicare and Medicaid Fraud”

March 17, 2026

At last month’s hearing in this subcommittee, Democrats expressed our deep concerns with the reckless way the Administration was using claims of fraud in health care programs to justify its violent immigration operation in Minneapolis where two Americans exercising their First Amendment rights were killed by DHS officers. President Trump has weaponized the entire government to punish states and political leaders he does not like, and agency leaders are complying with his retaliatory agenda. Unfortunately, that includes the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

In January, CMS notified the state of Minnesota that it was acting to withhold about \$2 billion in funding for 14 Medicaid services over the next year. This threatened funding cut will affect home and community-based care for older Americans and the disabled, services for people with substance use disorders, and services for children with autism. Minnesota health officials are pushing back on this threat, saying these cuts would be, quote, “disastrous” for Medicaid beneficiaries in the state.

One day after President Trump declared a “war on fraud” at the State of the Union, Vice President Vance and CMS Administrator Oz held a press conference to announce additional Medicaid funds would be held from Minnesota, which could result in as much as \$1 billion in additional cuts.

Taking billions of dollars from the state of Minnesota and treating the state like an enemy rather than a partner will not make its Medicaid program any less vulnerable to fraud. What it will do is hurt hundreds of thousands of Minnesota residents who rely on Medicaid services to live independent, healthy lives.

And CMS is expanding its so-called investigations to more states: California, Maine, and my home state of New York. It is painfully obvious why these states and Minnesota have been targeted. They are all states led by Democratic governors that President Trump lost in the 2024 presidential election. And in the case of Minnesota, the governor was the Democratic nominee for Vice President. He pointed out that the President and the people around him are “weird,” and now the President is taking away health care from his state’s residents. These are the petty reasons why the entire Trump administration is going after certain states, and we can expect they will continue to follow the same playbook elsewhere around the country.

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Politically motivated enforcement has real consequences for our constituents. Medicaid is a lifeline for more than 70 million people in this country. Patients pay the price when billions of dollars are withheld for entire categories of services rather than specific claims. CMS and congressional Republicans want us to believe that the cuts only hurt fraudsters, but in reality they are intentionally tearing down the Medicaid program. These cuts to Medicaid funding are just the latest Republican efforts to reduce health care services.

I don't want to see that happen in New York, Minnesota, or anywhere else in the country. Democrats want to improve access and affordability of health care for everyone and strengthen the federal health care system so it is efficient and sustainable.

The abuse of taxpayer dollars is coming from the President of the United States who is using government resources as his personal revenge fund to punish his political enemies. Congress should not sit by while CMS abuses congressionally appropriated funding to take vital services away from people.

We do not need to choose between consistent funding for Medicaid and combatting fraud. We can and must do both if we repair the damage being done by this administration and the congressional majority. To start, we need to restore the nearly \$1 trillion Republicans cut from Medicaid in their reconciliation bill last summer.

Today we want answers from the CMS Deputy Administrator about the attack on health care in Minnesota, any similar plans for other states, and the impact of these attacks on the health of Medicaid beneficiaries. Deputy Administrator Brandt, I hope that this is an opportunity for all of us to finally get some real transparency and specifics from an expert at CMS rather than the rudderless, partisan attacks that we have seen from Dr. Oz and Vice President Vance on friendly news programs or at press conferences.

I yield back.