

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

November 14, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
Via Facsimile: 202.690.7450

Re: IOM Report Followup

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I am writing today to express my concern that the Department of Health and Human Services (Department) has failed to respond to my letter of June 12, 2012, requesting information on the Department's actions following up on the Institute of Medicine's November 8, 2011 report calling for greater oversight of health information technology (health IT). My office confirmed with the Department's Office of Legislative Affairs that the letter was indeed received. I have included a copy of it for your review.

In its report, the IOM said evidence in the medical literature of the safety of health IT is mixed, and little published evidence has been found to quantify the magnitude of the risk. The report further stated that "safer [health IT] systems require efforts to be made by all stakeholders" and "the public sector must be part of the solution." In supporting increased oversight, IOM urged you to issue a plan within 12 months to minimize patient safety risks. In fact, the report said that the increasing use of health IT creates an "urgent need" for the development of a research agenda for the technology.

Almost five months ago, in my role as Chairwoman of the House Small Business Subcommittee on Healthcare and Technology, which has oversight jurisdiction over issues that concern small businesses, such as small medical practices, I wrote to you to request a copy of your plan to minimize health IT patient safety risks and a number of related documents, or the status of those documents if not yet complete, with the document to follow. Now, just after the one year anniversary of IOM's report, we have heard nothing from the Department about the status of any of my requests. Meanwhile, we continue to see media reports of patient safety risks related to health IT.

Once again, I respectfully ask that you respond to my letter and provide the requested information promptly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Renee Ellmers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Renee" and last name "Ellmers" clearly distinguishable.

Renee Ellmers
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Healthcare and Technology

Enclosure