

DIANE BLACK
6TH DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE OVERSIGHT

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

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

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I am writing to express my deep concern for the most recent decision by the Department of Health and Human Services to reduce training requirements for Navigator staff from 30 to 20 hours. Given that federally funded Navigators will soon interact with the public to articulate the complexities of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), reducing training requirements by 33 percent appears irresponsible.

To date, the American people—as well as health care experts—have expressed serious concerns with the enormous changes our nation's health care system is about to undergo as a result of the 2,700 page health care law. It is my strongly held belief that the ACA is unworkable. Three years after enactment, your Department has yet to take action to ensure that Americans will be able to access accurate and trustworthy information regarding the ACA, or keep their current health care plan.

As the law stipulates, Navigators are the individuals designated to communicate the law to the public, provide education on the health plans, and enroll Americans onto the government-run health care Exchanges. Given this daunting responsibility, taking time to ensure that Navigators are thoroughly trained is fundamental. Proper training of staff is the cornerstone of ensuring any program will be effective. In the healthcare sector, training hours are an integral component to readiness, effectiveness, quality, and care.

The decision to reduce Navigator training hours by one-third appears to be yet another indication that the law is not ready to be implemented. For this reason, I respectfully request that you provide information on the following questions relating to Navigator training:

- In making the most recent decision to reduce training hours, please provide a detailed explanation of why the training requirements were reduced.
- What specific material was removed from the training program?
- As the new training plan was developed, was the health care industry consulted?
 - If so, what specific industries and experts and in what capacity?

- When compiling the list and content of training materials, how many sample tests were conducted to ensure its effectiveness?
 - If tests were run, please provide the dates, frequency, content, and result.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to reviewing your responses.

Sincerely,



Diane Black
Member of Congress