THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

April 6, 2010

Dear Attorney General:

The passage of health insurance reform legislation is truly historic and promises to improve health care for all Americans. Reform will provide coverage for more than 30 million uninsured Americans, improve the quality of care, strengthen Medicare for our seniors, give families the peace of mind that comes with quality, stable, secure insurance, and reduce the federal deficit.

Unfortunately, scam artists and criminals may be using the passage of these historic reforms as an opportunity to confuse and defraud the public. Media accounts indicate that fraudsters have gone door to door selling phony insurance policies. Some have attempted to make dishonest profits by urging consumers to obtain coverage in a non-existent "limited enrollment" period that they falsely claim was made possible by the new legislation.

These types of scams are unacceptable and threaten Americans across the country. Sadly, they are not new. For example, during the height of the H1N1 flu outbreak, some attempted to market phony flu treatments. We are determined to stop dishonest individuals who are working to defraud the American people, no matter what their pretense.

At the Department of Health and Human Services, I have notified our aging networks about these scams and put our Senior Medicare Patrol teams on alert. In addition to their existing responsibilities, our Health Care Fraud Prevention & Enforcement Action Teams (HEAT) will vigorously monitor and crack down on new forms of fraud and abuse.

Now, we are counting on law enforcement officials in states across the country to crack down on those who seek to defraud consumers. While there are new insurance options in the near future – a new high-risk pool program for those blocked out of insurance due to a pre-existing condition and new insurance protections that begin in September – consumers should beware policies that are time limited, offer limited benefits, or advertise themselves as necessitated by health insurance reform. I urge you to vigorously monitor and prosecute any individuals who attempt to operate or profit from dishonest scams that take advantage of the new law. And I hope you will act quickly to make investigating and prosecuting these cases one of your top priorities.

The Department of Health and Human Services stands ready to serve as a resource for you and I look forward to working with you as we fight fraud, implement health reform legislation and strengthen our health care system.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sebelius

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