

January 23, 2001

FAX NO. (202)690-6960

Dr. David Satcher, Acting Secretary

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

200 Independence Avenue, S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. Satcher,

Per conversation with your secretary this date, I am forwarding information she requested that I send to you. As acting secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, I am requesting an immediate investigation into Medicare/Medicaid fraud within the State of Maine.

A couple of days after having met with three of Maine's representatives regarding not only medicare/medicaid fraud, but other frauds being perpetrated, a broadcast was heard on Channel 8 regarding Maine's investigation into Medicare/Medicaid fraud. I would like this investigation to begin with me. So as not to repeat myself, and take up more of your time, I am enclosing correspondence to Channel 8 regarding a serious situation that has taken place here in Maine which eventually led to the death of my mother. The details are in this correspondence. (See #1)

My request for an investigation into SouthRidge Rehabilitation & Living Center and Southern Maine Medical Center resulted in the attached report and correspondence from Carol Cole, R.N. (See #2 & #3) As you will see there is no follow up on the hospital and my evidence clearly indicates elder abuse, oversedation, and fraud; all at the expense of taxpayers. Setting aside that I disagree that my mother received good care at the nursing home, the fact remains that this nursing home has NO RECORD of my mother's stay at this home. People across this country have contacted me about this situation and are upset, living on fixed incomes, that they are paying into Medicaid and that money is being spent for services/prescriptions drugs that are not needed.

I have contacted Sen. Susan Collins regarding this issue and am attaching a follow up letter to her, dated January 11, 2001. (See #4) To date, I have not had a response.

The State of Maine's Medicare/Medicaid program is in trouble. Maine's

nursing homes are affected by Medicaid cuts. According to Rep. Nancy Sullivan, they are running in deficits too. If health care institutions don't have to keep records of patients, how do they prove that they are losing money. There is a smell to this.

What has been done to my mother at the expense of taxpayers, through Medicaid/Medicare is wrong! A full investigation into health care in the State of Maine is warranted. The Health Care Financing Authority which distributes Medicaid funds to states must be made aware of this fraud. Health care, being a big issue at state and federal levels, is a priority and fraud within the system is a definite priority. Health care costs are going up, but government can't solve all problems, states one representative to Maine's legislature. When problems point to fraud, the government MUST take care of, and solve, the problems. In Governor King's State of the State address this evening, he stated "people have to take responsibility." Governor King has not helped in this serious situation and certainly has not taken responsibility as Governor of the State of Maine. Neither has Mr. Concannon, as Commissioner of the DHS, taken responsibility. Mr. Concannon feels quite confident that Maine, with Sen. Olympia Snowe sitting on the Finance Committee in Washington, will fare well with monies coming into Maine. However, I don't think this will sit very well with other senators or representatives from other states who represent people on fixed incomes and have their constituents pay into frauds occurring in Maine.

President Bush stated that he "expects every member of his administration to stay well within the boundaries that define legal and ethical conduct" and "this means avoiding even the appearance of improper conduct." I will not go through with this administration what I went through with the last administration. I expect immediate action, a full investigation, on this serious issue that I have taken to you.

I appreciate your help.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Lafortune  
22 Graham Street  
Biddeford, Maine 04005