

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

February 13, 2018

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Administrator Verma:

I write to you to request additional information regarding a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) contract awarded to Myriddian, LLC (Myriddian) on September 22, 2017. Recent reports indicate that CMS awarded a \$485,000 contract—without undergoing a competitive bidding process—to Myriddian, a consulting company led by Merlynn Carson, the daughter-in-law of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Benjamin Carson.¹ These reports raise concerns that CMS's contracting process is potentially being abused and that Trump Administration officials and their family members may be receiving special treatment at the expense of the American taxpayers.

Myriddian is a workforce, healthcare, and information technology consulting firm based in Columbia, Maryland.² Merlynn Carson has served as the company's CEO since 2010, and her husband, Ben Carson, Jr., the son of HUD Secretary Carson, sits on the company's board.³ According to press reports, the \$485,000 contract, which was for career-development services for CMS contracting staff, was awarded to Myriddian following efforts by Carson, Jr. and

¹ *'Using his position for private gain': Ben Carson was warned he might run afoul of ethics rules by enlisting his son*, The Washington Post (Jan. 31, 2018).

² Myriddian, LLC, Home Page (<http://www.myriddian.com/>); *Ben Carson was cautioned son's involvement at HUD created appearance of a conflict, report says*, The Baltimore Sun (Jan. 31, 2018).

³ LinkedIn, Public Profile of Merlynn Carson (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/myriddian/>); *'Using his position for private gain': Ben Carson was warned he might run afoul of ethics rules by enlisting his son*, The Washington Post (Jan. 31, 2018).

Merlynn Carson to invite Administrator Verma to attend a HUD listening tour event in Baltimore that Carson, Jr. was involved in organizing.⁴ CMS reportedly awarded the Myriddian contract without a competitive bidding process.⁵

On December 4, 2017, I wrote to you to express my concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest and impropriety in the agency's reported subcontracting of rule rewrites through the MITRE Corporation and to request a briefing on the steps the agency takes to ensure its contracting work is performed free of undue influence.⁶ To date, I have yet to receive the requested briefing, and the recent reports surrounding the awarding of the Myriddian contract raise further concerns that CMS may not have adequate controls in place to fully ensure that its contracting and subcontracting work is performed free of conflicts of interest.

To ensure that our government serves the American people in a transparent and impartial manner, I request the following documents, as well as a response to the following, by March 6, 2018:

1. To what extent has CMS conducted oversight of the process by which the agency awards federal contracts? Have any violations of applicable regulations, policies, and procedures pertaining to conflicts of interest been identified, and, if so, what actions were taken in response?
2. Did any CMS personnel raise concerns internally about the awarding of the Myriddian contract to a company operated by family members of a Cabinet-level official?
3. Please provide all agency documents pertaining to the Myriddian contract and its awarding, including the task order for the contract, the request for proposal (RFP) for the contract, all administrative documents pertaining to the contract and its awarding, CMS's rationale for awarding the contract to Myriddian, and the contract itself.
4. Please provide all communications between CMS officials and employees or hired representatives of Myriddian pertaining to the Myriddian contract and its awarding. Such communications should include, but not be limited to, emails, letters, faxes and any other written materials, as well as a list of any meetings, calls, or other communications that took place between CMS officials and employees or hired representatives of Myriddian.
5. Please provide all communications between CMS officials and HUD Secretary Carson, Ben Carson, Jr., or Merlynn Carson pertaining to the Myriddian contract and its awarding. These communications should include, but not be limited to, emails, letters,

⁴ See note 1.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, to The Honorable Seema Verma, Administrator, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (Dec. 4, 2017).

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faxes and any other written materials, as well as a list of any meetings, calls, or other communications that took place between CMS officials and HUD Secretary Carson, Ben Carson, Jr., Merlynn Carson, or individuals speaking on their behalf.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Should you have questions, please contact Miles Lichtman of the Democratic Committee Staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pallone, Jr." in a cursive style.

Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member