

# COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

January 17, 2020

The Honorable Gene Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

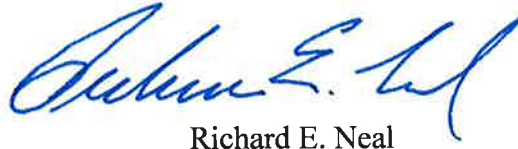
Recent reports from the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General (HHS OIG) have revealed disturbing trends in the quality of care delivered in some of our nation's skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and underscored the need for more transparency and oversight of the sector. Based on reporting requirements in the Affordable Care Act, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has recently begun collecting nursing home ownership information, including data on chain ownership. Given the increase in private equity investment in nursing home chains in recent years, these data have the potential to provide CMS with better insight into trends in nursing home quality within and across ownership type to inform implementation of more targeted oversight.

Accordingly, I request that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) examine the quality of nursing homes with chain ownership, including a focus on private equity owners, to the extent feasible. Specifically, we request that GAO address the following questions:

1. What do CMS data reveal about the quality of nursing homes with chain ownership? For example, is chain status associated with: number (and type) of deficiencies cited (including inappropriate use of antipsychotics or other drugs used as chemical restraints), low staffing levels, and poor performance? To what extent do these relationships change with a change in SNF ownership (e.g., from one chain to another chain or from an unaffiliated provider to a chain)? For example, does a change in the ownership of a SNF from individual provider to affiliation with a chain alter the number of deficiencies a facility receives during a given year or the staffing ratios at the facility?
2. How does CMS use the data on chain ownership? For example, does CMS track and trend quality data by chain ownership and use the results to inform its oversight or information it shares publicly? To what extent does CMS audit, review, and regularly update these data to ensure their accuracy?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Rachel Dolin of the Committee on Ways and Means at 202-225-3625 or [Rachel.Dolin@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.Dolin@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Richard E. Neal  
Chairman