

Concerns about ObamaCare Navigators

When the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act begins enrolling people in the health exchanges operated by the states and by the federal government, navigators and navigator assisters will be helping them. There are concerns in Congress about just who these people will be and what access they'll have to private information.



Louisiana Republican Rep. Charles Boustany and Texas Republican Rep. Kevin Brady sent a letter to Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius asking a series of questions about potential privacy violations by health insurance exchange navigators and non-navigator assisters.

Boustany — who chairs the Subcommittee on Oversight — and Brady — chairman of the Subcommittee on Health — have questions.

1. To what information will the navigators or non-navigator assisters have access? Social Security numbers? Individual tax ID numbers? Birth dates? Income info?
2. The proposed navigator rule says navigators and non-navigator assistants cannot be paid by the insurance industry or insurance companies or be associated with them in any way. However, can they be paid by or be members of a labor union? Can they be paid by a politically active tax-exempt organization? Can they be convicted felons? Or someone convicted of ID theft?
3. The rules say they must be trained. What is the training material for them?
4. Once a navigator processes an enrollment form, what are the steps to make sure the form is properly handled and that it is in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.
5. Where is the assurance that privacy safeguards are in place in the exchanges? And is the federal government requiring similar safeguards in the exchanges run by the states?
6. What non-government sources of funding will there be to support navigator organizations?

By the way, the salaries of the navigators and non-navigator assisters is from a \$54 million grant.