

LAWMAKERS ASK CMMI DIRECTOR FOWLER TO BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT PROJECTS

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) Director Liz Fowler promised to keep Congress up to speed on what her center is up to one day after a bipartisan group of House lawmakers demanded she be transparent on how the agency determines demonstrations to be successful and work more closely with Congress and stakeholders on innovation efforts.

The lawmakers said there are bipartisan concerns about CMMI's authority and obligations, particularly about the scope and duration of demonstration projects and the transparency of the center's actions and decision making.

"We believe that CMMI could strengthen its model development by allowing more stakeholder engagement. Further, Congress and the public need to know how results will be sampled and evaluated and which beneficiaries stand to be affected," a bipartisan group of 26 lawmakers, led by Reps. Terri Sewell (D-AL) and Adrian Smith (R-NE).

CMMI demonstrations would be stronger with more transparency, the lawmakers wrote in their letter. HHS needs to reveal the modeling the center uses to produce estimates of savings and how quality will be affected by the demos, they added.

"Consistently, modeling has been biased toward savings rather than improving beneficiary health or addressing health disparities. Stakeholders need to know what analytics and standards are used to define a successful demonstration," the letter says.

The lawmakers also call for CMMI to use real-time data to make quicker decisions about a demonstration's value.

"We kindly request that you share your plans for making CMMI more transparent and we would like to learn more about how you will develop models that focus on measurable cost savings, address beneficiary health, and reduce health disparities through models that are both appropriately scoped and can be adopted or abandoned based on their impact," the letter states.