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ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Opening Statement

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, Ranking Member

### Hearing on "A Roadmap for Hackers? Documents Detailing Healthcare.gov Security Vulnerabilities"

January 28, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning. Today is the 23rd hearing our Committee has held on the Affordable Care Act. As I did at our previous hearing two weeks ago, I want to recognize the importance of what has been accomplished to date.

The law went into full effect on January 1, and now millions of people are obtaining health insurance coverage they did not have before. They are receiving critical medical care, and they have the security of knowing they will not go bankrupt if they get into an accident or get sick. This is an historic achievement.

The law also put into place key protections for consumers. Insurance companies are now prohibited from discriminating against people with cancer, diabetes, and other preexisting conditions. Insurance companies may not charge higher prices for women, and millions of people are now receiving free preventative care.

There are also huge financial benefits. Health insurance companies are sending rebate checks to millions of people. Since the law was passed, we have seen the lowest growth in healthcare costs in 50 years. If we repealed the law today, it would increase our deficit by more than \$1.5 trillion dollars.

In terms of the security of the website, we received testimony two weeks ago from the Chief Information Security Officer of CMS. She told us: "There have been no successful security attacks on the FFM, and no person or group has maliciously accessed personally identifiable information." I want to repeat that—no person or group has maliciously accessed personally identifiable information on the Healthcare.gov website.

The Chief Information Security Officer also said that, following security testing in December, Healthcare.gov has a "clean bill of health." Although no system is hack-proof, she said she is "confident based on the recent security controls assessment and the additional security protections in place that the FFM is secure."

I want to thank the Chairman for proposing that today's hearing be held in executive session, a motion that I will support.

The MITRE Corporation and the Department of Health and Human Services have warned the Committee repeatedly that some of the security testing documents we have obtained contain highly sensitive information and could provide a roadmap for hackers and others seeking to do us harm. I think it is a positive step that the Committee is willing to hear from these officials first-hand about their concerns. Conducting the hearing in executive session will allow us to discuss this sensitive information directly with the experts.

As we have heard on numerous occasions from cybersecurity experts at MITRE and the Department, the Security Control Assessments contain information about cybersecurity methods and the fundamental cyber-architecture of Healthcare.gov that "transcends the specific security control vulnerabilities which have been the focus of news reports and the Committee's public inquiry."

Even when specific vulnerabilities identified by security testing have been addressed, these experts warn that publicly disclosing the Security Control Assessments could still jeopardize Healthcare.gov and other CMS data networks.

I believe our goal as a Committee should be to conduct responsible oversight that provides the American public with information necessary to understand the security of the Healthcare.gov website, while at the same time protecting sensitive information that could endanger the website's functioning or compromise the personal information of the American people.

Let me conclude by thanking the officials testifying here today. Dr. Charest, this is your second time before the Committee in as many weeks. Thank you for returning to address these questions in a closed session.

Mr. Shomo, I understand that you are one of the engineers responsible for conducting security testing of Healthcare.gov on behalf of the MITRE Corporation. As a non-profit organization with a long history of running federally funded research and development programs, MITRE is known and respected for its objectivity and independence.

We appreciate everything you both are doing to remain vigilant and protect the security of Healthcare.gov. Millions of American families thank you for helping them get access to the life-saving care that they need.

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