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January 22, 2014

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am deeply troubled by recent reports that dozens of Russian diplomats and their dependents apparently engaged in systematic Medicaid fraud while in the United States.¹ I am writing to request further information about this matter.

According to the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, 25 current and former Russian diplomats and 24 of their spouses allegedly participated in a scheme to illegally obtain Medicaid benefits for prenatal care and related costs by underreporting their income or falsely claiming that their children were citizens of the United States.² Over the course of almost ten years, they and other co-conspirators received approximately \$1.5 million in benefits to which they were not entitled. The U.S. Attorney further alleges that this behavior was facilitated by the staff of Russian diplomatic offices in the U.S., who supplied false documentation to New York officials in support of the fraudulent Medicaid claims made by the diplomats and their spouses.³

This situation raises a number of important questions about government programs that provide benefits to foreign diplomats. I therefore would appreciate written answers to the following questions not later than February 5, 2014:

¹ Evan Perez, "Sources: Diplomatic Fraud Ring Also Spied," December 9, 2013, CNN.com, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2013/12/09/first-on-cnn-sources-diplomatic-fraud-ring-also-spied/>.

² Kuleshov, Mikhail *et al.*, 13 MAG 2711 Complaint, S.D.N.Y., available at <http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys/pressreleases/December13/KuleshovMikhailComplaintPR/Kuleshov,%20Mikhail%20et%20al.%20%2013%20MAG%202711%20Complaint.pdf>.

³ U.S. Attorney's Office, "Manhattan U.S. Attorney And FBI Assistant Director-In-Charge Announce Health Care Fraud Charges Against Current And Former Russian Diplomats And Their Spouses," December 5, 2013, <http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2013/manhattan-u.s.-attorney-and-fbi-assistant-director-in-charge-announce-health-care-fraud-charges-against-current-and-former-russian-diplomats-and-their-spouses>

1. On December 6, 2013, Department of State Deputy Spokeswoman Marie Harf stated that foreign diplomats in the United States “who meet certain eligibility criteria may apply for and receive federally funded medical care.”⁴ What are the medical programs for which foreign diplomats⁵ may be eligible? What are the eligibility criteria? Over the last 10 years, how many foreign diplomats have used these programs? What was the total cost of the benefits provided? Please provide these data sorted by foreign diplomatic mission or international organization.
2. Are foreign diplomats eligible for government-funded benefits other than Medicaid (*e.g.*, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)? If so, which programs and what are the eligibility criteria? Over the last 10 years, how many foreign diplomats have taken advantage of these programs? What was the total cost of the benefits provided? Please provide these data sorted by foreign diplomatic mission or international organization.
3. Is the Administration aware of other cases where foreign diplomats fraudulently or inappropriately obtained Medicaid or other government-funded benefits? Please provide the details of these cases, including the cost of any benefits that were inappropriately obtained.
4. What is the Administration doing to ensure that foreign diplomats cannot inappropriately obtain government-funded benefits in the future? Has the Administration asked relevant government benefit agencies to check their rolls for the names of foreign diplomats? Does the Department regularly provide a list of foreign diplomats to relevant government benefit agencies?

If additional information is needed, please contact Thomas Alexander, Chief Counsel for Oversight and Investigations, at (202) 225-5021. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Eliot L. Engel, Ranking Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs

⁴ Department of State, Daily Press Briefing, December 6, 2013, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2013/12/218491.htm>.

⁵ In this and subsequent uses, “foreign diplomats” means all nonimmigrant aliens in the “A” and “G” visa classifications, including dependents and personal employees.