

February 2, 2026

The Honorable T. March Bell  
Inspector General  
Department of Health and Human Services  
330 Independence Avenue Southwest  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Inspector General Bell:

I write today regarding Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz's video, which was posted on an official government social media account on January 27, 2026. In this video, Administrator Oz accuses businesses owned by Armenian Americans in the Van Nuys neighborhood of Los Angeles of being fronts for a \$3.5 billion hospice fraud scheme and implies that the Armenian script on the signage of a popular bakery indicates its affiliation with the "Russian, Armenian mafia."<sup>1</sup> The video also includes the blurred out faces of people on the balcony of a storefront with Armenian script, implying their participation in fraudulent activity. I strongly urge you to open an independent investigation into this incident, which should include an inquiry into misuse of taxpayer dollars and flagrant targeting of communities based on ethnicity.

These allegations peddle a racist conspiracy about California's Armenian American community and undermine Armenian Americans' civil rights. California is home to nearly 250,000 Armenian Americans — more than half of the Armenian diaspora in the United States. This community has been subject to discrimination and the deep pain of historical and ongoing injustices. To suggest markers of Armenian culture, language, and identity are indicative of criminality underscores a discriminatory motive that could taint any investigation into fraud and incite the further demonization of the community. The Administrator's inappropriate amplification of historical tropes and stereotypes in service of the Administration's agenda is an egregious misuse of official resources and communication channels.

As the top official at CMS, the Administrator's comments risk real-world consequences for the health and wellbeing of Armenian Americans. In 2024, CMS spending through Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) amounted to \$1.7 trillion — roughly one-fourth of the federal budget. As the agency tasked with overseeing such a massive portion of U.S. spending, actions and statements by the CMS Administrator have an outsized influence on the entire U.S. health care system. By making baseless, incendiary claims about all Armenian Americans, the Administrator has pitted the community against the U.S. health care system, an outcome that could chill providers' willingness to engage with the community.

<sup>1</sup> <https://x.com/DrOzCMS/status/2016150183868878882>

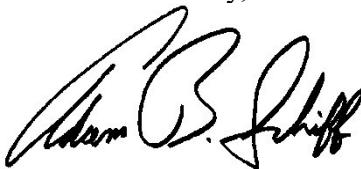
As a former federal prosecutor in Los Angeles who investigated and prosecuted fraud against the federal government, I take allegations of fraud very seriously. Anyone engaged in fraud should be investigated and prosecuted. But to single out one community and label it as a culprit is no way to identify fraud; it is indiscriminate slander instead. If Administrator Oz has concerns, I stand ready to work with him, as I have worked with stakeholders in the state of California to achieve our oversight responsibilities. However, we should not tolerate the reckless and abhorrent targeting of the Armenian American community.

In light of the severity of the allegations made against the Armenian American community, I urge you to open an investigation into Administrator's Oz's actions described above. I request responses to the following questions by February 20, 2026:

1. Did Administrator Oz use taxpayer dollars to fund his visit to Van Nuys? And did Administrator Oz or his staff perform any work outside of the visit itself?
2. Has CMS conducted an official investigation into hospice fraud in the Van Nuys neighborhood of Los Angeles, California? If so, were those results shared with the Department of Justice prior to Administrator Oz's visit?
3. Is it standard practice for the CMS Administrator to visit sites under investigation or suspected of participating in fraud?
4. What evidence does CMS have that widespread hospice and home care fraud is being committed in Van Nuys? How did CMS and its staff identify the 42 hospice centers in the video as potentially engaging in fraud?
5. Did Administrator Oz violate any HHS policies which prohibit employees from engaging in discriminatory behavior toward individuals or groups based on their ancestry or ethnic background?
6. On what basis, apart from ethnic stereotyping, did Administrator Oz link Armenian script with the "Russian, Armenian mafia?" What information was provided to the Administrator to back up those serious allegations, and how was it vetted?

I urge OIG to investigate the Administrator's actions and help in ending these attacks against the Armenian American community. The Armenian American community in Los Angeles has contributed so much to Southern California with their culture and determination to forge new lives for themselves and their families after unspeakable horrors. I welcome any serious effort to combat waste, fraud and abuse, but the rule of law requires that it be based on evidence, not language, culture, or ethnicity.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator