



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Medicare improper payments for ambulance transports
Da: Friday, Jan. 27, 2006

The Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services recently released a report entitled "Medicare Payments for Ambulance Transports," OEI-05-02-00590. The report found that 25 percent of ambulance payments in calendar year 2002 failed to meet Medicare's program criteria. This means the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services improperly paid nearly \$402 million for ambulance transports that year. The report outlines serious vulnerabilities with ambulance transports. Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, with jurisdiction over Medicare, made the following comment on the report.

"Improper payments are a chronic problem with ambulance transports. It's frustrating to see yet another report showing the same old thing. We really need to get this under control once and for all. Improper payments threaten both Medicare's integrity and sustainability. Taxpayers shouldn't accept an improper payment rate of 25 percent. The findings highlight the need for CMS to issue uniform requirements regarding the type of documentation provided to determine whether or not the payment is appropriate. CMS concurred with the report's recommendations, and I'll work to ensure that CMS implements them so that Medicare dollars aren't lost to improper payments."

The report is available at <http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-05-02-00590.pdf>.