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EXCLUSIVE POLITICS

DOGE Aides Search Medicare Agency Payment Systems for Fraud

Elon Musk's allies have been on site at Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services offices this week

By [Anna Wilde Mathews](#) and [Liz Essley Whyte](#)

Updated Feb. 5, 2025 1:05 pm ET



CMS IS THE CENTER FOR MUCH OF THE U.S.'S COMPLEX HEALTHCARE ECONOMY

Representatives of Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency have been working at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, where they have gotten access to key payment and contracting systems, according to people familiar with the matter.

The DOGE representatives have been on site at the agency's offices this week, the people said, and they are looking at the systems' technology as well as the spending that flows through them, with a focus on pinpointing what they consider fraud or waste. DOGE representatives are also examining the agency's organizational design and how it is staffed, the people added.

White House and DOGE officials didn't comment. Musk, on his X platform, posted: "Yeah, this is where the big money fraud is happening," referring to the Medicare agency in a [repost](#) of another user who referenced the Journal's reporting.

Musk's allies have moved swiftly to exert control over vast swaths of the U.S. government, including [at the Treasury Department](#) and the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#). They have demanded access to sensitive information at federal agencies and laid out plans to block spending they deem excessive.

CMS in particular is a highly politically and economically sensitive agency. It is the nerve center of much of the nation's complex healthcare economy, with outlays of about \$1.5 trillion in fiscal 2024, or about 22% of the federal total. With around 6,710 employees, it oversees Medicare, the health coverage program for older and disabled Americans and Medicaid, for lower-income enrollees, among other areas. Many veteran CMS staffers have worked there for decades.

A CMS official said that the agency has "two senior agency veterans who are leading the coordination with DOGE," and that CMS leaders are "taking a thoughtful approach to see where there may be opportunities for more effective and efficient spending in line with meeting the goals of President Trump."

One of the systems accessed by the DOGE representatives is CALM, or the CMS Acquisition Lifecycle Management system, which includes information about contracts, according to people with knowledge of the matter.

One of the people familiar with DOGE's work at CMS said that, to their knowledge, Musk's allies hadn't yet been given access to databases that include identifiable personal health information of Medicare or Medicaid enrollees. DOGE also hadn't yet accessed a sensitive accounting system called HIGLAS, or the Healthcare Integrated General Ledger Accounting System, this person said.

The DOGE access is "read-only," meaning that its affiliates cannot make changes to the systems, the person added.

CMS payment structures are complicated, and they vary by program, often involving layers of contractors and other companies. Much of Medicare, for instance, now goes through private insurers, which are paid by the federal government. Medicaid is jointly overseen by federal and state officials, and federal payments typically flow to the states.

The federal government has enforcement efforts around healthcare fraud, at the Justice Department, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, and CMS itself.

Dr. Mehmet Oz, the high-profile physician and former television host, has been nominated to lead CMS, but hasn't yet been confirmed by the Senate. Several CMS officials who are expected to work under Oz have already taken over at the agency.

Ken Thomas contributed to this article.

Write to Anna Wilde Mathews at Anna.Mathews@wsj.com and Liz Essley Whyte at liz.whYTE@wsj.com

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SF **Stephanie Fowler**

2 hours ago

I'm unclear why WSJ reporters are referring to DOGE as a government department. There is no such department created by congress which is the only way you become a department. This is sloppy reporting from a source that I depend upon for better, unbiased, fact-based reporting. Additionally, there are not representatives. This is a billionaire run amuck and his very young, very inexperienced, group of young men who have no legally sanctioned access to the systems they are infiltrating. This is a data breach and anyone in the private sector would be exposed to significant requirements to remediate the breech. I approach reporting with an open mind but I expect the WSJ to be accurate. Disappointed subscriber.

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DW **DAN WOJCIK**

3 hours ago

\$43 million on a gas station in Afghanistan that had no customers, \$1.5 million to promote LGBT Jamaicans, \$4 million for trans Serbians, \$5.5 million for gay rights in Uganda, \$17 million for Vietnam "inclusion," \$25 million to promote "green transportation" in Georgia, \$1 million for Arab and Jewish photographers, \$8 million to teach Sri Lankan journalists how to avoid "binary-gendered language," and \$122 million ended up in the hands of terrorists. That's where the USAID has been spending YOUR money. Democrats have been sending your tax dollars to all kinds of crazy places, like George Soros' prosecutor fund and even worse... the media. @politico received \$26 million dollars over the last four years from the federal government. The White House says it's all getting DOGED.

[Reply](#) · [Share](#)

SD **Steven Dent**

4 hours ago

About damn time!

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HD **Hanish Dayal**

5 hours ago

I think Medicare and Medicaid are the fraud..when are those programs going to be shut down so we don't default as a country? Shut that trash social security down too..stealing from today's youth to subsidize the old

(Edited)

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RC **Robert Cottam**

3 hours ago

Our Seniors rely on Medicare and Medicaid. The concept is good, the

Steve Bannon on Trump:

'Every Day Is Going to Be Day of Thunder'



De Minimis Ballooned This Chinese Market's Exports - Now That's Changing



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administration is the problem. The programs have virtually no cost containment or any challenging of the actual claim. Without claims management, fraud could run ramped. This program and USAID are excellent examples for the Government NOT to administer these programs!

Reply · 1 · Share

SF **shirin fard**

5 hours ago

All democratic countries have universal healthcare.
I bet Lord Elon and his allies have the best medical insurance.
Infamous Melania Coat I don't care do you?
Low income will suffer.
Not Rich

Reply · 2 · Share

SF **shirin fard**

6 hours ago

Who is going to audit Lord Elon,s, business and taxes ?
So everyone can see how much he got from government for his cars.
Who are his allies? Do they have any authority .
New era in U.S.
Rise and Fall of U.S.
Totalitarian government
(Edited)

Reply · 2 · Share

PB **Peter Biwol**

7 hours ago

Eventually, they might find out, what everybody knows: Biggest fraud is that Medicaid goes through private insurance companies, which just grab their share w/o doing anything. Add if, will they purpose to move Medicaid over to Social Security?
But wait, haven't there been voices in the past already to do exactly this? Weren't the names Bernie Sanders or, partially, Barack Obama!
So, I don't think that we hear about this from Mushrat & Co.

Reply · 1 · Share

DY **David Yastrab**

8 hours ago

An excellent of DOGE's time. The fraud by hospitals, SNF's, HH, and other centers is staggering. There are consulting firms whose sole purpose is to game reimbursement. This is a great use of Musk's time and will yield billions in savings.
Thank you Pres. Trump.

Reply · 3 · Share

MG **margaret gordon**

7 hours ago

So you clearly understand this well. My concern is the lobbyists through all this web of deception will keep the status quo.

Reply · 1 · Share

TS **Tim S**

8 hours ago

We need to know how Much Musk Mooched from Uncle Sam.

Once Musk has paid back the tens of billions of dollars taxpayers gave him, and once he has been held to account for working here without a work permit, he can talk about cutting other people's money.

Reply · 2 · Share

SB STEPHEN BEUCLER

8 hours ago

I predict that the amount of fraud found here will be massive.

Reply · 6 · Share

NB Neil Blackwell

9 hours ago

The US Government, as usual, is resisting full transparency, particularly to those who have the means ad the intelligence to find chicanery in its numbers and records. We citizens hope they won't get away with coverups this time..

Reply · 2 · Share

↳ **DT david taylor**

7 hours ago

Democrats are resisting full transparency...(fixed)

Reply · · Share

WS WAYNE SONG

9 hours ago

All US taxpayers should have access to information relating where our taxes are going--it's called transparency. What is controversial about that? What are Dems afraid of?

Reply · 4 · Share

GR Gerald Rogan

9 hours ago

We do payable claims analysis to look for fraud after months of data collection instead of in real time. Credit card companies could not exist with the limited approach CMS contractors use to stop fraud.

Reply · · Share

GR Gerald Rogan

9 hours ago

For Medicare and Medicaid programs, why do we allow medical liability lawsuits through the tort system instead of through an ALJ system? Are docs overtesting patients in order to prevent the risk of a lawsuit if the patient has bad outcome?

Reply · · Share

MC Michael Carr

9 hours ago

If immigrant Elon Musk as America's biggest welfare queen is truly concerned about fraud, he can start with the payments made to his own companies.

Reply · 3 · Share

↳ **Jeffrey P**

9 hours ago

The unfair competitive advantage he is getting by looking behind the curtain at US military and NASA contracts and the payments and tax information of his

competitors in a variety of sectors and fields he has direct business and financial interests in is an insanely large conflict of interest.

The Trump Administration responded to these concerns by saying Elon Musk will police himself regarding conflicts of interest, which is basically a license for corruption given to Elon Musk.

I am not saying a review of things is a bad idea and cutting where cuts can be made, but I am saying the way this is being done is corrupt and inappropriate.

Reply • 3 • Share

MC **Michael Carr**

9 hours ago

Exactly.

Reply • 2 • Share

Jeffrey P

10 hours ago

It's nice Elon Musk gets access to sensitive Treasury data that allows him to see operational, tax and payment information about competing car companies, Boeing, Northrup Grumman, ULA and others.

Nothing like a glaring conflict of interest and corruption right out in the open for everyone to see.

Reply • 8 • Share

LR **Luis Rugeles**

10 hours ago

Beautiful

Reply • 1 • Share

GR **Gerald Rogan**

10 hours ago

Excellent. I worked as a Medicare contractor to help stop fraud and abuse. Our tools were analysis of claims data and local coverage decisions. Tools we should have had are: root cause analysis of closed cases of fraud reported by whistleblowers. Why did CMS miss the fraud and abuse? We have RCA for airplane crashes. Why not for Medicare crashes? An example is the Redding Medical Center disaster of 1998-2002. 750 people received unnecessary heart surgery. Another is the disaster at St. Joseph Hospital by Dr. Marc Midei. CMS has no RCA process to improve itself when it fails to detect fraud but whistleblowers do. I proposed this solution to CMS in 2017 at its invitation but never received a response. Disgusting!

Why did CMS allow Sutter to steal \$90 million by over-reporting the illness burdens of its Medicare Advantage subscribers? Should the patients validate their illnesses to prevent over-reporting?

In traditional Medicare, can we use AI to detect potentially fraudulent claims instead of waiting for a year or more to analyze the data? Fair Isaacs proposed a solution in 1997 to my contractor, EDS, but CMS refused to try it.

Why are hospital outpatient departments paid more for the same service provided in a physician's office, such as a mammogram?

Why do we allow the FDA to approve new implanted medical devices through the

Why do we allow the FDA to approve new implanted medical devices through the 510(k) process? A good example of its failure is the FDA approval of metal-on-metal hip implants. The FDA center for devices was out to lunch on that one.

(Edited)

Reply · 2 · Share

MG margaret gordon

6 hours ago

I think you might be interested in NYT article that stated head of CMS was concerned about the stakeholders and were giving MA plans 3 years from that point to slowly tamp it down over a 3 year period. This was from the Biden admin 3/31/23 article. Regarding delaying crackdown on private MA plans.

Reply · · Share

PT Plamen T

10 hours ago

Read-only access refers to copy and paste personal data and sell to the highest bidder.

Reply · 3 · Share

RH Rockne Hughes

10 hours ago

Don't know about Medicare but Medicaid is being abused big time. There are thousands of people on Medicaid that are able to work and instead choose to live off the government. For thousands of people it is another welfare system. According to statistics there are roughly equal numbers of retirees on Medicare. There are 20% more people on Medicaid than on Medicare and 10 people on Medicaid for every one of those defined as disabled. It is abuse of the system and an abuse of the taxpayers money.

Reply · 2 · Share

GR Gerald Rogan

10 hours ago

I know. Here is a case I worked on. In LA, down and out dual eligible patients were paid \$50 to go to a clinic, fill out a form, and receive unnecessary non invasive tests, the results of which no one used. The owners of the clinic hired a doc to be the "owner" on paper. When the fraud was detected years later after millions were lost, the crooks left the country with our money. The doc was left holding the bag and filed bankruptcy.

Reply · 1 · Share

TF Tom F

11 hours ago

When Democrats get this upset you know it's because they know Trump has struck a major positive chord with the American public.

Reply · 3 · Share

RC Robert Cottam

3 hours ago

One has to wonder why Democrats are so upset at the challenge to USAID. You would think that this is where major fraud is being committed. Why is this not being covered by the New York Times?

Reply · · Share

MM M Morris

11 hours ago

Bulldozing the constitution and the US Government to "own the libs". Wait till the red states start to miss the government handouts they have been living on. Imagine the J6 crowds turning on Trump. Will be wild!

Reply · 3 · Share

TF Tom F

11 hours ago

You predicting. I am observing. I like what I see -- much better than restricting American oil exploration, draining our emergency oil reserves, dictating vehicle standards and using my money to pay off the loans of others.

Reply · 3 · Share

VD Vada Davis

12 hours ago

Sounds like a pack of hound dogs, howling at the moon.

Reply · 2 · Share

AB Andras Boros-Kazai

12 hours ago

Fraud has been the routine for years, but we were seldom told about them. Now, finally, we are. Thank you, Musk.

Of course, since eliminating fraud is but a dream (in DC!), perhaps it is better if we don't know about it: We sleep better, and what's a few billion, anyway?

Besides, it's the democratic way. Right, Joe?

Reply · 2 · Share

GR Gerald Rogan

10 hours ago

Read License to Steal by Malcolm Sparrow.

Reply · 1 · Share

JS Joan Steidl

12 hours ago

Google the phrase: who did Trump pardon for Medicare and insurance fraud? Hard to believe he's serious about this.

Reply · 1 · Share

KW KENNETH WARREN

10 hours ago

When you look at the pardons by any president, you will always find ones that you would not agree with. That is not a very good barometer.

Reply · 1 · Share

DS David Swenson

12 hours ago

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/bidens-clemency-pardon-list-includes-former-elected-official-lawyers-m-rcna184032>

I did



Biden's clemency and pardon list includes former elected official, lawyers and medical bill company...



nbcnews.com

Reply · · Share

RN Richard Norman

12 hours ago

"DOGE Aides Search Medicare Agency Payment Systems for Fraud" They will find lots of fraud. Wait until they start looking and Medicaid.

Reply · 2 · Share

CB Cheryl Bickett

10 hours ago

Medicare and Medicaid has an excellent history of rooting out fraud. They have penalized hospitals for millions. It's hospitals and doctors who commit the fraud, not the recipients.

Reply · 1 · Share

RC Robert Cottam

12 hours ago

Finally the arrow is pointing to the right target! I can only guess how much waste there is in the Medicare system.

Reply · 1 · Share

GR Gerald Rogan

10 hours ago

About 30% or more. An example is the use of the Emergency Department for non-life threatening problems that could be handled in a physician's office or urgent care center. For example, most patients with an ankle sprain do not need an x-ray. A minor torn knee ligament does not need an MRI. Acute Appendicitis can be diagnosed without a CT scan. I was an ER doc.

Reply · · Share

RC Robert Cottam

5 hours ago

Great information, Thanks!

Reply · · Share

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JS Joan Steidl

12 hours ago

If Trump is anti fraud why did he pardon some of the biggest Medicare fraudsters?

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/trumps-pardons-included-health-care-execs-behind-massive-frauds>



Trump's pardons included health care execs behind massive frauds

pbs.org

Reply · 1 · Share

JS **Joan Steidl**

12 hours ago

So much for rooting out fraud and punishing those who are responsible. Here is who Trump pardoned in his first administration.

<https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/enforcement/houston-woman-sentenced-for-conspiring-to-commit-50-million-health-care-fraud-and-money-laundering/>

Reply · 1 · Share

ME **MICHAEL EDMONDS**

13 hours ago

Every rock DOGE turns over exposes more bugs needing extermination and the bugs immediately run to their MSM protectors for cover.

I'm going to need more popcorn...

Reply · 13 · Share

JL **Jeffrey Lynch**

13 hours ago

I believe this is where the real money is. The home medical supply business is ripe with fraud. For starters I will bet that almost all Medicare recipients received COVID test kits they did not request at largely marked up prices.

Reply · 7 · Share

DG **David Greaney**

13 hours ago

Hopefully they shut down United Healthcare's scams ripping off Medicare as have been written about repeatedly in the WSJ.

Reply · 4 · Share

MG **margaret gordon**

12 hours ago

I have my doubts, but I sure hope so. The majority of the public is unaware which is another problem.

Reply · · Share

RS **Rascal S**

14 hours ago

Medicaid is Welfare

Reply · 2 · Share

KW **KENNETH WARREN**

10 hours ago

Yes it is. Not to be confused with Medicare. Both are rife with fraud.

Reply · · Share

TB **Thomas Boyd**

14 hours ago

Trump, Musk and team continue to look at Taxpayer funded supply chains looking for waste, fraud, abuse, theft. Why would any American, other than those perpetuating waste, fraud, abuse and theft, be opposed?

We know why, don't we? In USAID, you have a taxpayer supported liberal supply chain, led and staffed by left wing activists and nutjobs. \$7 M to Politico? \$41 B budget? For what? And they do not want any of us to see the books.

(Edited)

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RG Ralph gibson

14 hours ago

This should be the mother lode. If we can get the cries of distress about mothers, children, old people and minorities being tossed out of hospitals by Musk and his team, we should be able to mine a rich vein of waste and fraud.

Godspeed, DOGE.

Reply • 7 • Share

DD Dan DeCristoforo

14 hours ago

WsJ is going the way of CNN every single article title as an opinion headline. Not not fair and balance at all. He's fixing the problem 80/20 rule

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RY Richard Yurick

14 hours ago

All the savings should be used to balance the budget, not give tax breaks to millionaires. But not one word on balancing the budget.

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