

DEPARTMENT OF

**ELDER
AFFAIRS**
STATE OF FLORIDA

CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

July 29, 2010

Ms. Kathy DuBose, Staff Director
Joint Legislative Auditing Committee
111 West Madison St., Room 876
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400

Dear Ms. DuBose:

Florida Statute 20.055(5)(h) requires department inspectors general to monitor the implementation of the state agency's response to any report on the state agency issued by the Auditor General or the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. No later than 6 months after the Auditor General or by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability publishes a report, the inspector general shall provide a written response to the agency head on the status of corrective actions taken. A copy of the response will be filed with the Legislative Auditing Committee.

Please find attached a copy of the six-month status for the following report:

OPPAGA Report No. 10-09; "Number of For-Profit Hospices Has Grown; Current Measures and Standards Are Not Sufficient to Assess Hospice Quality"

The current status of each comment is highlighted in yellow for ease of review. Please advise if you have any questions. I can be reached at 414-2117. Thank you for your time.

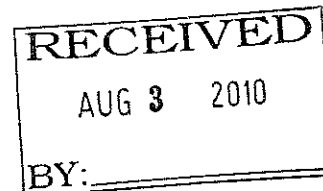
Sincerely,



Tony Hernandez, CISA, CIA
Director of Internal Audit

TH/ah

Enclosure



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E. DOUGLAS BEACH, PH.D.
SECRETARY

DOEA Office of Inspector General
Follow-up Status for OPPAGA's DOEA Report No. 10-09
"Number of For-Profit Hospices Has Grown; Current Measures
and Standards Are Not Sufficient to Assess Hospice Quality"

INSTRUCTIONS: WRITE YOUR RESPONSE ONLY IN THE HIGHLIGHTED AREAS.

Finding #	Finding No. 1:
Finding Title	<i>The department has not yet produced the annual hospice report required by law.</i>
Report Date	January 2010
Contact Person	Mindy Sollisch
Program/Unit	Planning and Evaluation
Phone Number	414-2181
Recommendation	The department anticipates that it will collect 2009 performance data from hospices by March 31, 2010, and will submit an annual report based on this data by September 2010.
Original Response	The Department concurs with the report as provided, including the recommendation to ensure that data reported by hospices is complete and accurate. Within the next few months the Department will receive its first full year of outcome measures data from Florida's hospices. We believe use of the new online form the Department has made available along with increased communication with Florida's hospices will help us achieve the goal of ensuring data completeness and accuracy.
CURRENT STATUS	The Department is in the process of analyzing the data provided by the hospices and is working with the hospices to have incorrect data updated. A final report is expected to be completed by September 2010. This will be the first year since the outcome measures have been required that a full year of data is available.

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Finding #	Finding No. 2:
Finding Title	The department's measures and their standards may not be sufficient to assess hospice performance.
Report Date	January 2010
Contact Person	Mindy Sollisch
Program/Unit	Planning and Evaluation
Phone Number	414-2181
Recommendation	<p>...additional measures would provide a more complete picture of whether hospices are meeting the overall needs of their patients, including how well hospices tend to patients' emotional needs and how well they support patients' families in caring for their loved ones and in the grieving process.</p> <p>The department should assess these measures and their standards to determine the degree to which they relate to quality of care. In doing so, the department should examine Florida hospice data as well as research that addresses hospice quality and include this information in its first annual report. Based on this assessment, the department should consider adjusting the current standards and adopting additional measures to better assess hospice quality and effectiveness. For example, the department should consider additional measures from the Family Evaluation of Hospice Care survey or other instruments that have been validated for assessing end-of-life care.</p> <p>The department should also consider measures that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is currently testing and validating for hospice participation in Medicare.</p>
Original Response	The Department concurs with the report as provided, including the recommendation to ensure that data reported by hospices is complete and accurate. Within the next few months the Department will receive its first full year of outcome measures data from Florida's hospices. We believe use of the new online form the Department has made available along with increased communication with Florida's hospices will help us achieve the goal of ensuring data completeness and accuracy.
CURRENT STATUS	The Department is in the process of analyzing the data provided by the hospices and is working with the hospices to have incorrect data updated. After the analysis is complete, the Department will work with the hospices to identify additional measures that provide a more complete picture of quality of care. A validated national survey will be available later this year that is expected to contain measures Florida can adopt. A rule hearing and changes to a statute are required before new measures can be adopted.

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Finding #	Finding No. 3:
Finding Title	The department needs to ensure the data reported by hospices is complete and accurate.
Report Date	January 2010
Contact Person	Mindy Sollisch
Program/Unit	Planning and Evaluation
Phone Number	414-2181
Recommendation	To address these issues and to ensure that data reported by hospices is complete and accurate, the department should develop edit checks in its automated data collection process and test the reliability of the data. In addition, to facilitate comparing hospice quality, it should require hospices to report data by hospice program location rather than by company or license and work with hospices to ensure that each program achieves a reasonable response rate.
Original Response	The Department concurs with the report as provided, including the recommendation to ensure that data reported by hospices is complete and accurate. Within the next few months the Department will receive its first full year of outcome measures data from Florida's hospices. We believe use of the new online form the Department has made available along with increased communication with Florida's hospices will help us achieve the goal of ensuring data completeness and accuracy.
CURRENT STATUS	The Department is in the process of analyzing the data provided by the hospices. Submitted data is being edit checked and the Department is working with the hospices to have incorrect data updated in preparation for the creation of the annual report.