

US House Members Seek Probe Of

Medicare Ad Campaign

By John Connor - Dow Jones International News

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WASHINGTON (Dow Jones)--Eight members of the U.S. House of Representatives asked for an investigation of the Department of Health and Human Service's involvement in what they called a taxpayer-funded advertisement campaign to promote the Administration's Medicare bill.

"Specifically, we are concerned that this effort is a use of taxpayer funds for political purposes and that the Administration will be using its own campaign operatives to place the ads," the lawmakers said in a letter Thursday to Dara Corrigan, the acting principal deputy inspector general at HHS.

They requested that the investigation address several questions, the first of which was "is it legal to use taxpayer money to fund this advertising campaign?"

Congressmen signing the letter seeking the probe were Reps. Rahm Emanuel, D-Ill., Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., Frank Pallone, D-N.J., Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., Tom Allen, D-Maine, Marion Berry, D-Ark., and **Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill**

"On Feb. 3, the White House announced that it will use \$9.5 million from HHS for a television ad campaign to 'rebut criticism of the new Medicare law,'" the lawmakers wrote. "In addition, \$3.1 million will be used for newspaper, radio, and Internet ads in both English and Spanish. Why would the Administration undertake this program two years before the program is to even start?"

"It has also come to our attention that a media firm currently working for the President's reelection campaign has been hired to purchase the \$9.5 million worth of television ad time for this commercial," they added.