

Grassley Asks FDA to Explain Instructions to Contractor on Documents

Written by Grassley Press
Wednesday, 25 July 2012 13:33

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WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa is asking the Food and Drug Administration to explain a purchase order with a contractor certifying that 80,000 pages of employee communications posted online did not contain sensitive or personally identifiable information.

“The documents contained screen shots of employees’ personal email and their email addresses,” Grassley said. “That’s personally identifiable information by common-sense standards, and it’s protected by the Privacy Act. It appears the purchase order certifying there was no personally identifiable information was incorrect, and the FDA needs to account for that.”

Grassley is investigating the FDA’s email surveillance of a group of whistleblowers who are concerned about the safety and effectiveness of certain medical devices. A government contractor, Quality Associates, Inc., and the FDA put 80,000 pages of documents related to the whistleblowers on the Internet in the process of archiving them, raising questions about violations of privacy protection laws.

Grassley wrote to FDA Commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg to seek an explanation of the purchase order. His letter is available [here](#). Last week, Grassley wrote to Hamburg, seeking information about the scope of the surveillance project and who exactly authorized it. That letter is available [here](#).

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Grassley also wrote to other agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, that had documents made publicly available through the same contractor.

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