



COMMITTEE ON
**HOMELAND
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DEMOCRATS

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, *Ranking member*

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Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

CDM, the Future of Federal Cybersecurity?

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Over the past decade, hackers have breached networks across the Federal government, including the State Department, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Justice, the Department of Energy, and the Office of Personnel Management.

These hackers show no signs of slowing down. Instead, their tactics are growing more aggressive and more sophisticated.

Congress has charged the Department of Homeland Security with important responsibilities associated with taking on evolving threats to Federal networks.

Chief among these responsibilities is helping Federal agencies improve visibility of networked assets and prioritize efforts to correct vulnerabilities. Initiated in August 2013 and formally authorized in the 2014, the Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation Program (CDM) is supposed to do just that.

Through four phases of implementation, CDM will help agencies understand: (1) What assets are on their networks; (2) Who is on their networks; (3) What is happening on their networks; and (4) How to protect data on their networks.

Unfortunately, despite the security benefits CDM can provide, implementation has been slow. As of last month – nearly five years after CDM was launched - only 8 Federal agencies had transitioned to operations and management of Phase 1.

A number of reasons have been offered to explain why CDM implementation lagged behind expectations, including ambitious programmatic goals, challenges in reconciling diverse agency structures and architectures, and resource and leadership challenges, among other things.

Indeed, so many explanations for slow CDM implementation have been offered that it is hard to suggest a silver bullet solution. What is clear, however, is that the threats to our federal networks are far outpacing agency implementation of CDM.

It is critical that we understand why implementation has been so slow so we can give the Department the resources, support, and authority it needs to resolve ongoing implementation challenges.

That is why the expertise of the panelists today is so valuable.

I will be interested in understanding what you all view as the lessons learned from the implementation of Phase 1 that can be applied to improve future implementation of the program.

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