



Chairman Tom Cole

*Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

Budget Hearing of the Secretary of HHS

March 29, 2017

Opening Statement As Prepared

Good morning, Mr. Secretary. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. We are looking forward to hearing your testimony.

Mr. Secretary, your responsibilities are many. Your department is responsible for ensuring proper payments of Medicare and Medicaid dollars, for overseeing biomedical research that can save millions of lives, for helping families break the cycle of poverty and for protecting our nation against bio-terror and pandemic events.

The cuts proposed in the budget blueprint this month are extensive and span the reach of your agency. I believe there is always fat that can be trimmed and priorities that can be re-ordered. But I will ask you some questions this morning about whether this budget leaves America sufficiently prepared to respond to a pandemic, a new disease like Zika, or a bioterrorism event.

I will ask questions about how you will fulfill your mission of enhancing the health and well being of Americans at these levels of funding.

I will ask how you will work to solve some of the challenges in your agency, including those related to Indian health services.

And, ultimately, this Subcommittee needs to know in detail what cuts you propose and what missions you are either down grading or eliminating. I know some of those details will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead, but we look forward to hearing what you are able to share today.

As a reminder to the subcommittee and our witness, we will abide by the 5 minute rule so that everyone will have a chance to get their questions asked and answered.

Before we begin, I would like to yield the floor to our Ranking Member, the Gentlelady from New York, and finally our Subcommittee Ranking Member, the Gentlelady from Connecticut, for opening statements.

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