

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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MEMORANDUM

March 24, 2022

To: Members of the Committee on Oversight and Reform
Fr: Committee Staff
Re: Hearing on “Examining Pathways to Universal Health Coverage”

On Tuesday, March 29, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. ET, in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building and on the Zoom video platform, the Committee on Oversight and Reform will hold a hybrid hearing to examine pathways to universal health coverage in the United States.

I. BACKGROUND

More than 27 million adults in the United States are uninsured.¹ The majority of people who are uninsured fall into a “coverage gap,” meaning they are ineligible for public insurance, do not have private insurance through an employer, and cannot afford to purchase insurance individually. For example, more than two million people in the United States reside in states that have failed to expand Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act and are therefore unable to obtain affordable health insurance coverage.²

Many people with less income who are able to obtain some level of health insurance still lack coverage adequate to address their medical needs. More than 40% of adults in America are underinsured, meaning they struggle to meet their deductibles or to fulfill other cost-sharing requirements such as premiums and co-pays.³

¹ Commonwealth Fund, *As the Pandemic Eases, What Is the State of Health Care Coverage and Affordability in the U.S.?* (July 16, 2021) (online at www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2021/jul/as-pandemic-eases-what-is-state-coverage-affordability-survey).

² Kaiser Family Foundation, *The Coverage Gap: Uninsured Poor Adults in States That Do Not Expand Medicaid* (Jan. 21, 2021) (online at www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-coverage-gap-uninsured-poor-adults-in-states-that-do-not-expand-medicaid/).

³ Commonwealth Fund, *Health Insurance Coverage Eight Years After the ACA* (Feb. 7, 2019) (online at www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2019/feb/health-insurance-coverage-eight-years-after-aca).

Historically marginalized populations, including people of color, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and LGBTQ+ people, are uninsured and underinsured at disproportionately high rates.⁴

II. HEARING PURPOSE

The hearing will assess how uninsurance and underinsurance affect health outcomes and examine reforms that would expand access to affordable health care and advance health equity in the United States.

III. WITNESSES

Panel I

Christopher Willcox, MSW
St. Louis, Missouri

Chris Briggs
Woodburn, Virginia

Panel II

Ady Barkan, JD
Founder
Be a Hero

Uché Blackstock, MD
Emergency Physician
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Advancing Health Equity

Sara R. Collins, PhD
Vice President of Health Coverage and Access
The Commonwealth Fund

Jamila Michener, PhD
Associate Professor, Cornell University Department of Government
Co-Director, Cornell University Center for Health Equity

⁴ Kaiser Family Foundation, *Health Coverage by Race and Ethnicity* (July 16, 2021) (online at www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/health-coverage-by-race-and-ethnicity/); National Council on Disability, *The Current State of Health Care for People with Disabilities* (online at www.ncd.gov/publications/2009/Sept302009#Gaps) (accessed Mar. 17, 2022); Center for American Progress, *Repealing the Affordable Care Act Would Have Devastating Impacts on LGBTQ People* (Oct. 15, 2020) (online at www.americanprogress.org/article/repealing-affordable-care-act-devastating-impacts-lgbtq-people/); Center for American Progress, *Protecting and Advancing Health Care for Transgender Adult Communities* (Aug. 18, 2021) (online at www.americanprogress.org/article/protecting-advancing-health-care-transgender-adult-communities/).

Jeffrey D. Sachs, PhD

Director, Columbia University Center for Sustainable Development
President, United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network

Grace-Marie Turner

President
Galen Institute

Additional witnesses to be announced.

Staff contacts: Miles Lichtman, Sarah Jackson, Anya Crosby Olsen, Ben Smith, and Morgan Solomon at (202) 225-5051.