

**The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.**  
**House Energy and Commerce Committee**  
**Full Committee Markup**  
**H.R. 2810, the “Medicare Patient Access and Quality Improvement Act**  
**of 2013”**  
**Opening Statement**  
*July 31, 2013*

Thank you, Chairman Upton. I’m sorry that I wasn’t able to be here yesterday but I did want an opportunity to speak for a few minutes. H.R. 2810, the “Medicare Patient Access and Quality Improvement Act of 2013,” represents a true bipartisan attempt to finally repeal the sustainable growth rate (SGR) and replaces it with a program that begins to reward quality under Medicare’s fee schedule and supports the expansion of alternative payment models. The bill reflects hours of hard work, negotiation, and compromise by Democratic and Republican staff.

The Manager’s Amendment before us today makes significant improvements to the version of the bill that we marked up in

Subcommittee. I would like to thank my colleagues as well as the numerous stakeholders who have come to me, my staff, and Committee staff with recommendations on how to improve the proposal. It is this process that will help us to ensure that the final bill represents the best policy for doctors and seniors alike.

I will note that there are a number of issues that Members have raised that we have had to say “no” to in this setting. This is a joint product and in the interest of keeping the bill from becoming a Christmas tree, we—on a bipartisan basis—made the calculation to keep it narrowly focused on the SGR physician payment issues alone. This is not the last Medicare issue that will be discussed in Committee and we will continue in our role to work on other Medicare policy together.

While I am pleased with where the bill is today, I want to emphasize that this is still very much a work in progress. As I said last

week, this is a huge step in the right direction, but we have a way to go. With the changes from the Manager's Amendment, we are closer, but I look forward to continuing to improve the bill.

On that note, I would like to say that I hope that the Majority will continue to provide me, Mr. Waxman, and our staffs the deference they have shown up to this point. For the past few months, we have had constructive, bipartisan conversations that have without a doubt improved the bill. Even as the bill moves out of our Committee and to the floor, I hope that the Minority will continue to have a seat at the table.

Finally, as we move forward with the policy and as cost estimates come in from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), I would like to reiterate my concerns about offsets for this bill. Any time we reform Medicare, we must protect and improve seniors' and disabled individuals' access to needed care. That is why any offset options that

are considered for SGR should be realistic and viable. It is critical that we do not simply shift costs from one provider specialty to another, or worse, from doctors to Medicare beneficiaries. Given the bipartisan nature of the policy, the offsets must be agreed to on a bipartisan basis as well, and I ask for the Chairman's commitment to only support a mutually acceptable pay-for.

Thank you.