

Rep. Joseph R. Pitts
Opening Statement
Energy and Commerce Committee
Hearing on “PPACA Pulse Check”
August 1, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Administrator Tavenner, thank you for appearing before us today.

For months, various Administration officials, including HHS Secretary Sebelius, have been telling Congress that implementation of the President’s health care law is on track and that statutory deadlines will be met.

And, yet, in April of this year, HHS announced it was delaying full implementation of the Small Business Health Options Program or SHOP Exchanges, which were designed to offer small businesses *multiple* health insurance plans from which to choose.

On July 2, the Administration announced via a Treasury Department blog post, that the employer mandate would be delayed for one year, until January 1, 2015.

Just a few days later, HHS announced that it had decided to disregard the requirement that state exchanges verify individuals’ income when applying for Exchange subsidies.

Based on recent HHS decisions to implement what they simply “want” rather than what is statutorily required, what assurances do we have that Exchanges will be ready to enroll individuals in just 60 days and that states are ready as well?

How can we believe that provisions deemed “inconvenient” by the Administration— such as verifying that someone is actually eligible for a taxpayer-funded subsidy – won’t be labeled as too complex to administer and simply be ignored?

My constituents want to know what to expect over the next couple of months and want assurances that only those individuals who are eligible for subsidies will be receiving them.

American taxpayer dollars should be protected and not hastily spent on a law that may not be ready for primetime or on policies that don't require the utmost operational integrity

Our constituents have concerns and they need answers and with just 60 days until the large pieces of this law get started, I trust you came prepared to answer their concerns.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.