

Chair Rodgers Opening Remarks
Full Committee Markup
June 12, 2024

INTRO

Today the Committee on Energy and Commerce is taking action on 13 bipartisan bills from the health subcommittee to improve the health and wellbeing of the American people.

It is also Mr. James' first full committee markup. I know he's hit the ground running on our committee and has a bill on the agenda today. I'm thankful for his contributions.

MOMS AND BABIES

A number of bills today continue the important work of the committee to support moms and children.

For example, the Accelerating Kids Access to Care Act will make it easier for children enrolled in Medicaid to get the important specialty care they need.

Dr. Miller Meeks has been a leader on this legislation, and we heard testimony from Iowa Children's Hospital of the needless and detrimental delays in care due to red tape.

This bill is even more important now with exciting innovation in cell and gene therapies that could cure children with sickle cell and other rare diseases, but potentially require children to travel across the country.

Next, the SHINE for Autumn Act, which passed this committee and the House floor overwhelmingly last Congress ...

This is the second piece of legislation we've moved to help prevent the heartbreaking tragedy of still birth.

I want to share a special thanks to Debbie Haine ... who is in the audience today ... for her steadfast support and dedication to raising awareness on stillbirths for over a decade.

This bill is named after her daughter Autumn Joy, who was born still on July 8, 2011 ... we are honored to remember Autumn today, and thank Debbie for her tireless advocacy.

In addition, my friend Representative Chris Smith has for decades led the effort for more research into autism, and the best ways to support the entire population of individuals with autism and their families.

The latest reauthorization of the Autism CARES Act, which I am proud to support today, continues important HHS wide programs to further those goals.

We will also move Representative Obernolte's HOLD Act forward, to further support living organ donors who give the miraculous gift of life to patients in need.

And while not included on today's agenda, reauthorizing the pediatric rare disease priority review voucher program at FDA ahead of its September 30th expiration remains a top priority.

Patients with rare diseases and their families continue to push for action, and by continuing to work together, we can pass it out of this committee with broad bipartisan support.

MEDICAID PROGRAM INTEGRITY

We are also voting on four bills to improve program integrity in Medicaid.

Bills from Representatives Bilirakis, Miller-Meeks, D'Esposito, and Garcia will all reduce the rate of improper payments by ensuring that only current, living beneficiaries are enrolled in Medicaid and only legitimate providers participate in the program.

Bills that require timely disenrolling of deceased beneficiaries from Medicaid may seem obvious, but the Office of the Inspector General continues to find it is an issue.

I'm glad these members have prioritized being good stewards of Medicaid funds.

TELEHEALTH & SENIOR ACCESS TO CARE

And finally, I want to highlight the work the Committee continues to do to help seniors access health care.

This committee led on site neutral reforms as part of the Lower Cost, More Transparency Act to make sure that seniors paid the same out of their own pocket for drug administration, regardless of whether it was administered in a hospital or at a doctor's office.

During COVID-19, seniors were able to get specialty medications directly from their oncologist, but that is no longer the case.

Ms. Harshbarger's legislation will re-establish this option for seniors for another five years.

And we will continue work to improve access to telehealth in Medicare.

Mr. James' legislation will ensure program integrity measures are in place so we can more effectively see how telehealth is working for patients on Medicare.

Ms. Steele's legislation will make telehealth more accessible for patients with limited English proficiency.

I'll note that Members and our staff continue to work on a fully paid for package to extend telehealth flexibilities for seniors and include additional priorities on diabetic and cardiac care.

I am optimistic we will be able to move that package before the August recess and well before those authorities expire at the end of the year.

CLOSING

I want to thank all of the members for their hard work on these bills and taking the time necessary to get the policy right and move policies in a fiscally responsible way.

All the legislation today that increases spending in Medicare or Medicaid is offset with reductions in Medicare or Medicaid spending

I am proud of all that we have, and continue, to accomplish working together.

I yield back.