

Statement of the Honorable Doris Matsui
E&C Health Subcommittee Hearing
Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing today. I look forward to hearing from each of the witnesses about the targeted public health problems we are aiming to address, and your thoughts on the best solutions to these challenges.

In particular, I would like to highlight my support for the Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act, and I thank my colleague Representative Capps for her leadership on that issue.

Additionally, I would like to thank my colleague, Representative Ellmers for her work on the eating disorders legislation we are discussing today.

As many as 30 million Americans suffer from an eating disorder, but only 1 in 10 ever receives treatment. Eating disorders can have severe consequences and medical complications such as heart failure, organ failure, malnutrition, and suicide.

That is why I support the Anna Westin Act, which I have worked on with my colleague Representative Lance as well as the coauthors Representatives Deutch and Ros-Lehtinen.

The Anna Westin Act would train doctors and teachers to recognize at-risk behaviors in order to ensure earlier diagnosis and treatment, and it would clarify mental health parity for eating disorders so that insurers can't pick and choose mental disorders to exclude from coverage.

The pilot project in the legislation we are discussing today would test the impact of early intervention on the prevention, management, and course of eating disorders in grades 6 through 8. This is certainly a project that we should undertake.

I encourage support of this legislation, and I also encourage the Committee to take our work on eating disorder prevention a step farther by reviewing the Anna Westin Act as well. Thank you.