

Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Health Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 3299, the Strengthening Public Health
Emergency Response Act and H.R. 921, the Sports Medicine Licensure
Clarity Act
June 7, 2016

Today, our work continues to improve the public health as we consider two bipartisan bills: H.R. 3299, the Strengthening Public Health Emergency Response Act, and H.R. 921, the Sports Medicine Licensure Clarity Act.

Emergency preparedness has long been an important focus for this committee, and while it might not be a topic at the forefront of everyone's minds, our state of preparedness can impact everyone in Michigan and around the country. The 2014 Ebola crisis and the current Zika outbreak are just two examples of natural biological threats that we must take very seriously. Threats range from common and naturally occurring infectious diseases such as the flu virus to biologically engineered weapons of mass destruction.

Instead of responding to each emerging threat as an individual crisis, we must develop a comprehensive strategic framework that we can use with each new threat. One of our main challenges in addressing biologic threats is leadership. The Blue Ribbon Study Panel noted in their bipartisan report that we need clear leadership for biodefense, saying, "Centralized, effective leadership is necessary to

direct and harmonize their efforts, but because this is lacking, biodefense activities are insufficiently coordinated.”

The Strengthening Public Health Emergency Response Act, authored by Reps. Susan Brooks and Anna Eshoo, is an important step forward to keeping Americans safe by ensuring medical countermeasures are developed and procured. This bill has GAO examine how grants are being used to make sure that goals are being met, requires BARDA and CDC to better coordinate, streamlines countermeasure procurement and contracting process, and modifies the tropical disease Priority Review Voucher program.

We will also consider the Sports Medicine Licensure Clarity Act, introduced by subcommittee Vice-Chairman Brett Guthrie and Rep. Cedric Richmond, to help ensure that sports medicine professionals are adequately covered by their liability insurance while traveling with their athletic teams in other states. Current law is ambiguous as to how their insurance covers their work out of state, and this bipartisan bill acts as a solution to this routine problem.

We’ve got two important bipartisan bills that will help improve the public health, and they deserve our continued support.