

**Opening Statement of Chairman Walden
Subcommittee on Health
“Supporting Tomorrow’s Health Providers: Examining Workforce
Programs Under the Public Health Service Act”
September 14, 2017**

Today, our country is on the precipice of a health provider shortage, impairing our ability to meet the increasing demand for services, especially in primary care. Underserved areas, like many of the rural counties in eastern Oregon, are acutely experiencing this shortage now. That is why it is so important that the federal government maintain its long-standing investment in the education and training of health professionals.

Today’s hearing will examine four health professional education and training programs that will prepare current and future clinicians to meet the nation’s growing health needs and increase access to care. We will hear testimony from experts who are here to speak about the successes and challenges facing the different types of workforce programs under the Public Health Service Act.

Dr. Neil Calman, President and CEO of the Institute for Family Health, will speak about the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program, which supports the training of residents in primary care.

Dr. Adrian Billings, Medical Director of Presidio County Health Services will share his experience in the National Health Service Corps, a program that has been improving recruitment and retention of health practitioners in underserved areas through scholarships and loan repayments since the 1970s.

Both of these programs face a reauthorization deadline. It is my goal to move forward in a bipartisan manner on these extenders before the end of the month and ensure they are fully and responsibly offset.

We will also hear from Dr. Janice Knebl (*pron. Ka-Nable*), Chair and Professor in Geriatrics at the University of North Texas Health Science Center about Chairman Burgess's H.R. 3728, EMPOWER Act of 2017, which reauthorizes health professions workforce programs under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. This reauthorization includes the re-organization of the geriatric health professional grant program to reflect changes that the Health Resources & Services Administration has pursued to improve outcomes for geriatric patients.

Finally, we will hear from Dr. Juliann Sebastian, Dean of University of Nebraska's College of Nursing, about Representative Joyce's H.R. 959, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2017, important legislation that reauthorizes critical nursing education

workforce development programs under Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act.

These are important programs that we rely on, in one way or another. I'd like to thank our witnesses for being here with us today to give an update on how these programs are performing, so we can identify the best path forward in supporting their critical services.