

OPENING STATEMENT
21st CENTURY CURES IMPLEMENTATION HEARING
NOVEMBER 30, 2017

When we began the process of crafting 21st Century Cures four years ago, we began with one goal in mind: Helping patients and their families. Diana DeGette, my partner on the other side of the aisle, and I were inspired to act after hearing from folks in the research community as well as patients and their families about the need for modernization and more resources at the NIH and FDA to more quickly bring lifesaving treatments to market.

Two of these inspirations were the Kennedy sisters – Brooke and Brielle – from Mattawan, Michigan. Brooke and Brielle have a rare genetic disease called Spinal Muscular Atrophy – or SMA.

Cures provides the NIH and the FDA with billions of dollars in much-needed resources so that our nation’s best and brightest can work on finding cures for diseases that impact every single family.

Whether it be cancer, diabetes, lupus, or yes, rare diseases, like SMA.

This hearing is a great thing for many reasons. Most notably, it’s a reminder of how Republicans and Democrats came together to get a monumental piece of legislation signed into law despite our divided times. Diana worked with me on this endeavor hand-in-glove for years – yes *years* – as we listened and worked to craft the language that would ultimately become law.

The hearing is also a reminder that we have much work left to do. The Kennedy girls, along with millions of patients and families across the country are counting on us. For

that reason, I am immensely glad to welcome and thank Dr. Collins and Dr. Gottlieb for testifying before us today. I look forward to hearing from you both on how the law is being implemented and what we in Congress can do to help that process along.