



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 13, 2017

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Pallone Opening Remarks at Drug Supply Chain Hearing

“Making prescription drugs more affordable for the average consumer is an issue that we all care about and can support.”

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Health hearing titled “Examining the Drug Supply Chain.”*

This Committee has spent considerable time examining the drug supply chain both through the Drug Quality Security Act, and more recently through 21st Century Cures. Both of these legislative efforts were the result of considerable oversight and discussion as to how the drug supply chain worked, how it could be better secured, and how we could encourage efficiencies to improve drug development. These bipartisan efforts have helped address the post market security of products and the regulatory review process, but neither effort focused on how prescription drugs move through the supply chain through the financial lens.

Prescription drug prices are higher than ever, and while the dramatic rise in prescription spending has come down some, we know addressing drug costs continues to be a top priority for many American families. The costs of prescriptions have forced so many American families to make tough choices. For some, it’s a choice of filling their prescription or filling their tank of gas to get to work. For others, they are leaving prescriptions unfilled, skipping doses, or cutting pills in half so that they don’t have to purchase their prescriptions as often. None of these choices are acceptable.

Today prescription drug spending represents about 14 percent of overall healthcare spending. It’s no wonder that six in ten Americans have said that lowering prescription drug costs should be a top priority for Congress and this Administration. I am pleased that there has been such bipartisan interest in this topic – both during consideration of the Food and Drug Administration Reauthorization Act and at recent Member briefings. I do believe that making prescription drugs more affordable for the average consumer is an issue that we all care about and can support.

That is why today's hearing is so important. This morning we have the opportunity to better understand the drug supply chain and the often complicated ways that drugs move through the supply chain to the patient. As my colleagues have pointed out, we will hear from each of our witnesses about the role they play regarding drug delivery, the impact they have on the cost of a drug, and the value that they bring to patients and consumers.

I hope and expect that today's hearing will serve as a foundation for future hearings on policy solutions that may help reduce prescription drug costs in our healthcare system. While understanding how the supply chain works is critically important to this Committee, I urge Chairman Walden to schedule a legislative hearing in the early part of next year to examine specific proposals to address the high prices of prescription drugs. Our constituents want and expect us to take concrete action to address this growing problem.

The problems we are seeing in the supply chain cannot be addressed through one policy solution and all of our witnesses have a role to play in these solutions. It is long past time for Congress to take a serious look at all solutions that will help American families to afford the medications they depend on. I look forward to further bipartisan discussion on what that broad range of policy solutions may look like.

I want to thank each of our witnesses for being here. I look forward to learning more about your role in the drug supply chain and how we can improve access to drugs for patients in the future.

Thank you.

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