

Statement of the Honorable Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Health
Subcommittee Vote on Opioid Legislation and H.R. 5554
April 25, 2018

Today marks another important step in the committee's efforts to combat the opioid crisis: a subcommittee markup of 63 pieces of legislation that collectively, have the potential to really make a difference in our fight.

We've arrived at this point because of Chairman Burgess' and Ranking Member Green's leadership and the hard work of our subcommittee staffs. Together, they have spearheaded three legislative hearings examining some of the core areas of this crisis. We've reviewed legislation that will: protect our communities and bolster enforcement efforts, strengthen our prevention and public health efforts, and address coverage and payment issues in Medicaid and Medicare.

From examining ways to accelerate non-addictive pain treatment to reforming outdated privacy laws that do more harm than good, these are important issues worth discussing. Some of the bills before us today will continue to be finetuned, and I look forward to continuing those bipartisan conversations.

While I fully expect a thoughtful back and forth on some of the policies before us today, the truth is that this crisis is too big not to act.

We know there is no silver bullet, no one-size-fits-all approach that will easily end the catastrophic effects of this crisis over the last decade. But much can be done to help vulnerable patients get the treatment they want and need, and to ensure these powerful drugs are not getting into the wrong hands. Today, we can take another big step in achieving these goals.

Before we get underway, I'd like to thank my colleagues and our staff – on both sides of the aisle. This is important work and I appreciate everyone's desire to prioritize this effort. I look forward to continuing our work, and advancing these bills to the full committee for further consideration.