

**Opening Statement for Congressman Gene Green  
Health Subcommittee Hearing  
“Implementing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act: An Update from the Office of the National  
Coordinator”  
December 11, 2018**

Good Morning, I'd like to thank Dr. Rucker for testifying today on the Office of the National Coordinator's work to implement the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act.

In a little over a decade the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) has helped to drive the rapid adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) in doctor's offices and hospitals across America. Today nearly all hospitals and three quarters of office-based physicians use some form of certified EHR technology. This uptake has allowed for improved communication and patient care.

But we still have a long way to go in ensuring that EHRs are as useful as possible to providers as well as easily accessible and understandable to consumers. The Cures Act aimed to build on the progress of the HITECH Act of 2009 by focusing on improving interoperability and patient access to their health records and reducing provider burden.

For example, the Cures Act tasked ONC with providing examples of what does not constitute information blocking. This information is a critical piece of the law's implementation and will inform the Office of the Inspector General's enforcement regarding information blocking. I look forward to this proposed rule release.

The Cures Act also called for the development of a Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA). This framework outlines the minimum terms and conditions providers should meet in order to securely and appropriately exchange information with each other. Setting clear parameters around exchanging information is necessary for widespread interoperability. I'm pleased to hear ONC is undergoing a rigorous public comment process before finalizing this provision.

In addition to improving interoperability we need to increase consumer education so that folks understand they have a right under HIPAA to obtain access to their records and to decide who their records should be shared with. I'm glad that ONC has partnered with the Office for Civil Rights to release new information for consumers on HIPAA's patient right to access.

Increased interoperability and better health IT in general has the potential to improve every American's healthcare experience, so I hope that ONC will continue its implementation of the law in a timely manner. Thank you.