

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Health
“Lowering Prescription Drug Prices: Deconstructing the Drug Supply
Chain.”
May 9, 2019
*As Prepared for Delivery***

Thank you, Madam Chair, for revisiting this important issue. When I was Chairman last Congress we laid groundwork to help educate Members about the pharmaceutical supply chain and the players involved, many of whom will be represented on our two panels and the role they play in how a product is priced. It was one of our most popular hearings and I want to thank you for building upon that previous work.

As we all seek to continue to improve our understanding of the drug supply chain and how each step in the process impacts consumers, we can further deconstruct how the supply chain effects drug prices by hearing from witnesses from each step of the process: manufacturers, payors, pharmacists, providers, and patients. I’d like to welcome to each of our expert panelists that will help us understand the complex journey – from molecular discoveries to patient deliveries – a single dose of medicine takes.

Our committee has done much to help get lifesaving treatments patients. This includes championing the landmark 21st Century Cures Act, led by former Chairman Fred Upton and Congresswoman Diana DeGette. This important legislation sought to modernize the nation's biomedical innovation infrastructure, streamline the process for how drugs and medical devices are approved to get new treatments to patients faster. However, the impact of cutting-edge, lifesaving cures can't be fully realized if they remain largely unaffordable to most patients. While innovation and market competition are the key drivers of price reduction, we must also acknowledge that the complexity of the supply chain has an impact on access, delivery, and cost of drugs.

In the last Congress we reauthorized the Food and Drug Administration, and gave the agency new tools and resources to get generic drugs into the market faster. We've already seen this play out – last year FDA approved a record number of generic drugs, driving competition and giving consumers more choices. Then just last month, this Committee unanimously approved a number of FDA policies designed to increase transparency in the supply chain and bring down prescription drug costs. I hope we can continue to work across the aisle on commonsense policies to address rising drug costs – in doing so, we will rely on the testimony and insight of our witnesses today to help us improve both innovation and affordability.

I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses and hope all Members take advantage of this opportunity to better understand this complicated but so very important issue.