

POLITICO: House panel plans coronavirus hearing, citing public anxiety

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WASHINGTON — The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee will hold the first congressional hearing on the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak next week, in a bid to make facts about the virus "simple and clear" to the public, chairwoman [Anna Eshoo](#) (D-Calif.) said.

CDC Director Robert Redfield, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease Director Anthony Fauci and Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Robert Kadlec will testify, Eshoo told POLITICO today after a closed-door Energy and Commerce Committee briefing with the three officials.

The virus has killed nearly 200 and sickened thousands in China. So far, there are five confirmed cases in the United States, with more expected.

Eshoo said public anxiety is on the rise because of the surging numbers. But she added there should be more attention paid to seasonal flu, which has already killed thousands this season.

She and other Energy and Commerce members praised the administration's response to the viral outbreak. Lawmakers had asked during the briefing whether there was a need for a so-called coronavirus czar but were told that HHS Secretary Alex Azar was leading the effort and that such an extra position did not seem necessary.

The White House late last night released the names of its coronavirus task force headed by Azar that includes top administration health officials along with White House advisers.

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