

Congressman Richard Hudson

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

Energy & Commerce Health Sub Hearing: Empowered by Data:

Legislation to Advance Equity and Public Health

Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 at 10:30am

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD:

I want to thank Chairwoman Eshoo and Ranking Member Guthrie for holding this important hearing today, and thank our expert witnesses for their time and testimony.

As you may recall, last summer, I requested a hearing on the disparate impact COVID-19 was having on our minority communities, to which this Committee responded and held one. I am pleased we are reexamining this issue, particularly in the context of how we can work toward solutions by examining social determinants of health and the data associated to correctly address the issues raised.

I think we all can agree that minority communities are and have been experiencing gaps in access and health outcomes. This problem has

been further emphasized during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no question that across the nation, there remains alarming data of the disproportionate impact the Coronavirus pandemic has had on our minority communities.

Fayetteville, North Carolina, in my District, has a large and diverse community. At one point during the pandemic, I heard from leadership at a local hospital, Cape Fear Valley Medical Center that, while African Americans made up 57% of their COVID-19 patients, Cumberland County, where Fayetteville is located, is only 34.9% African American.

These inequitable outcomes are not just isolated to COVID-19. I continue to hear from my District about how the differences and lack of access to medical, economic, educational, and community resources leads to disproportionate outcomes.

Unfortunately, this is not localized to my District – this is a national and global issue, and we must not continue to settle for the status quo.

We must be looking at avenues to address the impact of social determinants of health, including some of the bipartisan bills discussed today.

I would particularly like to emphasize the importance of further enabling and promoting private sector innovation. I believe this can effectively be accomplished by continuing to incentivize public-private partnerships. This is an area I have focused on this Congress, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on this Committee to engage and bring forward bipartisan solutions.

I also agree with many of the witnesses and my colleagues today who have noted the need for more data. Data will help us dive deeper into the issues – allow us to effectively, efficiently, and appropriately conduct analyses, comparisons, and juxtapositions – to better inform not only us as policymakers, but the folks on the ground who are taking steps every day to work towards more equitable outcomes.

With that being said – I also think this data must be collected and examined in modern and responsible ways. We cannot solve this problem by creating additional bureaucracies and duplicative

programs. Our health systems already have enough on their plate.

We should ensure the initiatives we are proposing are streamlined and straightforward to implement, particularly in this constantly evolving technological area.

Again, I greatly appreciate the discussion today, and am committed to working with my colleagues on the Health Subcommittee to address health care inequality and the racial disparities in our healthcare system.