

Congressman Richard Hudson

STATEMENT FOR RECORD

Energy & Commerce Health Sub Hearing: Advanced Research

Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H): The Next Frontier of

Biomedical Research

Date: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 10:30 AM

STATEMENT FOR RECORD:

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

This is an incredibly important and timely topic to be discussing today, for several reasons.

First, while I believe we are making immense progress towards overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and moving towards managing this virus as an “endemic,” we still have many lessons to learn to ensure we are best prepared for future pandemics and national emergencies.

Continuing to research, examine, and determine how to better prepare is something I will never oppose.

Along these lines, I am proud to be the House Republican leader on pandemic preparedness issues, and look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues leading the ARPA-H legislative proposals – Representatives Upton and DeGette, as well as our Chairwoman, Representative Eshoo – in the context of ensuring we are best prepared moving forward.

To do this – I believe it is imperative that we look to both the successes and failures we have faced during this COVID-19 pandemic.

I think we can all agree Operation Warp Speed would be considered a resounding success. It is my hope that Warp Speed can serve as a blueprint for policy proposals and thoughtful reforms to speed up medical countermeasure research, development, and manufacturing.

Operation Warp Speed combined the expertise of BARDA with the scale and speed of the Department of Defense (DOD). The mission of OWS was to complete advanced development of promising COVID-19 vaccines

and treatments, and then rapidly scale up manufacturing. It is my opinion OWS largely accomplished this mission, saving countless American lives in the process.

As we look to future reforms, and based on this prior success, BARDA could be well suited to serve as a landing spot for much of the advanced development and manufacturing of medical countermeasures. I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to thoughtfully review BARDA's current capabilities and capacities, and determine where there might be potential gaps, both in terms of resources and manpower.

As we continue to review current functions, it is also smart to look forward. I commend my colleagues for their work on ARPA-H. Although the proposals may vary in organization and set-up, all are built upon the basic premise of creating a model that is laser focused on ensuring the United States remains the worldwide leader in highly innovative, large-scale, biomedical research and medical countermeasures advances.

We have seen through Operation Warp Speed and such programs as NIH's ACTIV ("Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and

Vaccines”) that this can best be accomplished by harnessing the power of public-private partnerships, bringing together industry with academia, non-profits, and the government.

In light of the success of Operation Warp Speed, I welcome the opportunity to continue working with my colleagues to review, examine, and determine how best to utilize and complement the expertise of both BARDA and DOD, as well as our other currently existing capabilities, entities, and agencies, as we consider the utility of a separate, mission-driven agency such as the proposed ARPA-H.