

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Health Subcommittee Hearing
**“Investing in Public Health: Legislation to Support Patients, Workers,
and Research”**
June 29, 2022
As Prepared for Delivery

INTRO

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The bills before us today reflect the importance of the committee's authorizing responsibilities over key public health programs.

NIH RESEARCH INTEGRITY

We are discussing today about the threat to biomedical research posed by our adversaries and examining a few steps we could take to address those threats.

In the last few years there have been numerous reports of FBI investigations into researchers taking U.S taxpayer supported intellectual property to China, not disclosing foreign connections, or tampering with the peer review process.

Republicans are leading to try to address those issues and hold China accountable.

Mr. Curtis's bill H.R. 5442, *the Fix Nondisclosure of Influence in Health Research Act*, which requires HHS to report on how they address noncompliance with disclosure requirements or research misconduct related to foreign influence.

Mr. Hudson's H.R. 6305, *the Protect America's Biomedical Research Enterprise Act*, requires the administration to identify ways to improve intellectual property protection and develop strategies to prevent national security threats in biomedical research...

...and Mr. Bilirakis's H.R. 5478, *the Protecting the Integrity of our Biomedical Research Act*, requires NIH grantees to disclose their participation in foreign talent programs.

I look forward to examining bills to address this and understanding what more can NIH be doing to address these threats and who has the responsibility – NIH, or the grantees – for protecting this information?

These are critical to protecting our national security.

They also compliment work done in the ARPA-H Act related to research security, which just passed the House, to stop the CCP's influence in our biomedical research.

If we don't do a better job of safeguarding our research, both America's national security and our global leadership will be more at risk.

The pandemic has only made the need for action more urgent...

... and I thank my Republican colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee for solutions to hold NIH and HHS accountable for their responsibilities to protect national security.

NIH

In addition to provisions related to research integrity, there are a number of other NIH bills we're considering today.

I have not been shy about my concerns with NIH.

Their lack of accountability and response to Congressional oversight is appalling.

Their authorization has expired.

There is no permanent director.

I think we need to have NIH testify and do more oversight of how NIH is functioning as a whole before providing new authorizations of funding for NIH.

I have spoken to the Chair of the Subcommittee about that and hope we can work in a bipartisan way to reform NIH and rebuild trust that the NIH has broken with the American people.

RURAL HEALTH CARE

In addition to NIH, we will also be considering solutions that increase access to health care services in underserved and rural communities – like my district.

Mr. Pence’s Rural Telehealth Access Task Force Act will help identify barriers to telehealth services in rural areas, so we can better understand how to make telehealth more widely available.

We are also considering the MOBILE Health Care Act, which allows community health centers to use their funding to purchase mobile health clinics as well as conduct facility renovations and construction projects.

I understand the need for increased access to health services and appreciate how helpful mobile units have proven to be in rural areas.

However, I do want to note that I am concerned about permanently allowing funds to be used for construction, instead of health care delivery.

Community Health Centers are an integral part of the health care safety net and have received almost \$38 billion over the last 5 years – this includes supplemental funding provided during the public health emergency.

I am hopeful that we can come to a consensus on this legislation and work together to conduct oversight in advance of the funding expiring next year.

PROCESS

I wanted to thank our witnesses for testifying. A special thanks goes out to Desiree Sweeney, CEO of NEW Health in my district in Colville, WA – it’s great to have you here today.

I also want to emphasize the importance of oversight and topical hearings before legislating, including having federal agencies come before this

committee to comment, discuss programs, and other related health initiatives.

That should have happened today.

CONCLUSION/DOBBS?

I want to thank our Members for putting forward such thoughtful solutions to these important public health issues.

Thank you, I yield back.

IF NEEDED on DOBBS

Regarding the Supreme Court's decision last week...

... abortion is the sharpest, soul searching question before us as a nation. It's the greatest human rights issue of our time.

It pierces every heart.

People have strongly held beliefs and stories... and both sides are guilty of dismissing one another.

Fear and despair leads to more arguments, anger, discord, and more insecurity.

My hope is that we learn, that we open our hearts to the science, to the research, and technology and come to reject abortion because it is inhumane.

I think about how Congress came together around Frank Stephens, a man with Down syndrome who told us his life is worth living.

Let's find ways to build on that work... listen to each other... not tear each other down... so we improve every person's life at every stage and beyond.