

Congressman Brett Guthrie
September 20, 2022 Subcommittee on Health Markup
Opening Statement
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Today we are marking up several bills, including H.R. 3173, the Seniors Timely Access to Care Act, and H.R. 3655, which addresses very specific problems within a three-decade old vaccine compensation program.

I know H.R. 3173, the Improving Seniors Timely Access to Care Act, has been a priority for many members of this subcommittee, and for good reason. Prior authorization can be a useful tool, but it needs to be done based on data and in such a way that patients receive the most appropriate type of care without delays and unnecessary paperwork. This bill strikes the balance between streamlining the prior authorization process while ensuring this tool remains in place.

However, I do hope that we can work toward finding offsets to this bill and H.R. 3655 before they are signed into law.

On the Flint legislation, I think this legislation would have benefitted from a hearing so we could understand and discuss the goals of the program and ensure other communities that have been impacted by lead in their water are also able to get the necessary help for those in their communities as well.

I am disappointed that we have not heard directly from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Rochelle Walensky since March 2021. Over August, Dr. Walensky announced an internal review of CDC operations, which may include how CDC balances its mission with respect to infectious diseases and then the operation of programs like this Flint registry.

Should CDC support this registry forever? Or now that the registry is established, maybe it should be transitioned to state or local control.

I should also note that while we are debating these bills the Senate is holding an important oversight hearing with key Biden Administration health officials on the Administration's response to Monkeypox. I hope that this committee can hold a preparedness hearing soon and discuss

ways in which we can implement more effective approaches to responding to future pandemics.

I also am disappointed that my legislation, H.R. 7744, the Building America's Healthcare Workforce Act, is not being heard today. Soon, thousands of temporary nurse aids will be left without work, and consequentially, patients will lose access to individuals who have cared for them at their bedsides throughout the pandemic.

Nursing facilities across the country have historically struggled to recruit and retain good talent, and this legislation would help address the workforce shortage in this field. I would like to ask the Majority to hold a hearing on this legislation and solutions to address the dire workforce shortage facing our long-term care industry. Patients, their families, and our health care workforce will be better off if this becomes law.

Thank you, and I yield back.