

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Health Subcommittee Markup
September 14, 2022
As Prepared for Delivery

INTRO

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MOBILE, VICP

I'll start where we agree.

Mr. Hudson and Ms. Herrera Beutler's H.R. 5141, the MOBILE Act will make sure that community health centers could use their grant funding for mobile units.

This will help people in rural communities access care they need.

In addition, Mr. Upton worked tirelessly on H.R. 3655 to reform the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.

We are taking a small step to improve the program, and I look forward to working with Chairman Pallone for an offset before this moves to the floor.

I appreciate changes made to Mr. O'Halleran's legislation that reauthorizes a trauma center grant program that will hopefully be adopted in a manager's amendment, but I still have outstanding concerns about changes to the state matching requirements.

I thank Chairman Pallone for continuing to work with me on this before full committee.

H.R. 3173

We are also moving H.R. 3173, which is a top priority for Dr. Bucshon, and I'm grateful for his hard work.

We had a hearing in the oversight subcommittee and many members raised concerns about denials and prior authorization delaying the care seniors need.

This bill requires standardization and timely responses, and will give seniors more information about how often claims are denied.

However, the Congressional Budget Office released an estimate that costs to Medicare will go up by billions over the next 10 years.

I hope we can work to find an offset and move this important legislation that improves care for seniors while also making sure Medicare is solvent for seniors in the future.

One way to do that is to address the costs of health care.

The data on record-high inflation that was released yesterday shows health insurance costs are surging—the largest increase ever of 24 percent.

Democrats claim they addressed this, but the reality is they merely shifted unaffordable costs for the 18 million people on Obamacare to hardworking taxpayers.

They have done nothing to lower costs for the more than 155 million Americans that get health insurance from their employer.

I hope we can work to shed more light on tactics insurance companies are using to supposedly reduce, or rather shift, rising costs.

People battling heartbreaking illnesses like cancer should not have to battle insurance companies as well.

FLINT

The bill I have the most concerns with is the Flint Registry Reauthorization Act.

We have not had a hearing in this Congress to reassess the health harms created by the governmental fiasco and dangerous tragedy that occurred in Flint.

It was a failure at all levels of government—local, state, and federal.

We have a responsibility to properly review this and ensure solutions will improve people's lives and actually prevent a crisis like this from happening again.

People in every part of this country should be able to trust that the water coming out of their taps is safe for their children to drink.

We're seeing other examples of localities mismanaging their water supply, like the terrifying situation in Jackson, Mississippi.

I understand the railroad labor dispute is threatening clean water around the country too.

These are challenges that deserve this committee's attention.

Unfortunately, that is not the focus on H.R. 6737.

This bill will add an authorization of another \$50 million for quote "a city exposed to lead contamination in the local drinking water system."

Based on the title and text, that only applies to Flint, Michigan when there are other localities that need our attention too.

It doesn't include any oversight or review of current state and federal efforts in Flint, but it does spend tens of millions of dollars to quote "establish" a registry that's already been established.

The program has already received more funding than authorized, and it isn't clear where the money has been spent.

The Flint registry touts, for example, spending money on unrelated costs like shipping 60,000 masks during COVID-19.

My colleagues and I have amendments filed so we can properly debate and bring oversight to this program.

For accountability, we should have had this discussion at a hearing first... and worked toward a solution we could all support.

I hope that we can come together to help other communities in America benefit from a registry—communities like Jackson, Mississippi... ... that are dealing with its own government failures that have led to unsafe drinking water, as well as other areas of the country where this has been an issue.

CONCLUSION

Overall, I know we will have a robust discussion.

As we head into the full markup, my colleagues and I are eager to ensure the Energy and Commerce Committee is leading for proper oversight that helps us move the best possible legislation forward.

Thank you.