

Congressman Brett Guthrie

Opening Statement

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you all for being here. In today's markup we will consider a number of bills, including four that

- protect and promote greater patient access to quality health care,
- make our health care system more transparent for patients and their families, and
- drive more competition and choice in our health care system.

These themes united us by bridging ideology and party lines. Many of the bills we are considering are the product of robust bipartisan work with the common goal of helping patients.

The subcommittee undertook a rigorous process:

- We held hearings,
- heard from impacted stakeholders, including relevant government agencies, and
- incorporated feedback shared with subcommittee members and staff from both sides of the aisle over the course of the past several weeks.

These bills represent key priorities of the American people, and I look forward to advancing these bills before the full committee.

We have heard countless stories about the complexity and opacity of the health care system, and how that hurts patients, employers, and even health care providers. Today we will consider legislation to increase transparency into:

- The prices that hospitals, laboratories, and insurance companies charge patients and employers
- The black box that defines the prescription drug market
- The complex web of consolidation, including the rapid vertical integration that is taking place in our health care system.

These solutions will bring much-needed transparency to patients and employers. As policymakers, we are seeking to strengthen our health care system and federal programs to ensure patients are getting the greatest value possible.

These bills also reauthorize numerous programs designed to bolster patient access to care, particularly for those most in need. We're taking up legislation to protect access to care in vulnerable communities by eliminating looming cuts to disproportionate share hospitals and continuing funding for the community health center program, both of which serve thousands of patients in each of our districts.

One of the problems that I hear about the most frequently back home are the workforce challenges across the health care system. Legislation before us today would serve as one step to addressing some of these challenges, especially in rural communities by extending funding for the Community Health Center Fund, the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education program, and the National Health Service Corps.

We're also promoting access to care for vulnerable Americans who need lifesaving, one-of-a-kind treatments. My bill, the Medicaid VBPs for Patients Act, or the MVP Act, would provide access to the most innovative cures for Medicaid patients living with otherwise incurable or untreatable life-threatening conditions. We are talking about patients dealing with diseases like sickle cell, Duchene muscular dystrophy, and debilitating bleeding disorders. I want to personally thank Ms. Eshoo for her leadership to take on this bill with me that will ultimately save lives and promote long-term savings for state Medicaid programs.

Our hearings have shown us how lower costs and higher quality of care can be achieved through polices that promote competition and choice. At our last hearing we heard Chair Rodgers describe the experience of a senior citizen whose went from paying \$30 to \$1,400 for an annual shot simply because her clinic reclassified itself as a hospital outpatient setting.

Today we will vote to end a policy that forces Medicare patients to pay more for physician-administered medicines in hospital outpatient settings than they would pay in a doctor's office. Seniors shouldn't pay more for the same drug and same level of care in one care setting than another, and this policy is a first step towards broader reform.

Additionally, patients waiting for a transplant have also suffered from a lack of competition within the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network. These critically ill patients shouldn't be left waiting longer for a life-saving transplant because of an outdated system and today we will vote on legislation to increase competition and improve the effectiveness of this critical service for some of our most vulnerable patients.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for colleagues on both sides of the aisle for how deeply engaged everyone has been on these issues. The American people and our health care system will ultimately benefit from your bipartisanship and your leadership.