

## **Cathy McMorris Rodgers**

### **Opening Statement**

#### **11.15.23 Health Markup**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

First, I'd like to take a moment to thank Dr. Burgess for his two decades of service to the American people and on this Committee. He has been a staple of this subcommittee, in particular, and an invaluable voice for patients and doctors alike.

I know we still have plenty of work to accomplish in the next year and look forward to our continued work together as you run through the tape.

Today, this Committee is plowing the hard ground on issues critical to the American people.

We will advance 21 piece of legislation that will make a difference for millions of Americans.

### **LOWERING DRUG COSTS**

First, to lower drug costs for seniors and the Medicare program...

... we will consider legislation that takes a free market approach to sharpen the incentives for Medicare Part D plans and their pharmacy benefit managers.

### **IMPROVING COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS**

Next, we'll work to address one of the most pressing issues facing the Medicare program today—how the program covers new and innovative technology.

We saw this play out with respect to Alzheimer's-related treatments.

We want Medicare to be able to support our loved ones' access to the best treatment available...

Whether that be an FDA-approved curative medicine...

... or a cutting-edge technology.

I talked at our last hearing about how central planners will ultimately fail to pick the most efficient price possible to pay health care providers.

They will also fail us if we leave coverage decisions to them.

I appreciate the bipartisan work to improve this coverage process and ensure that more seniors have greater access to care.

## **TAILORING PAYMENT POLICIES**

Finally, we will take the next step in the process of addressing how Medicare pays physicians.

Congress once again finds itself considering how to address Medicare payments to physicians.

We have spent a lot of time this year talking about ensuring physicians can remain in private practice. A stable and predictable policy environment would give them the certainty to plan financially and make the investments needed to do so.

That is my goal. To preserve patient access to independent physicians.

We will consider a short-term extension of a payment policy that prevents cuts to rural physicians while also considering legislation that takes a thoughtful, serious approach to reforming the Medicare physician fee schedule.

## **DOING OUR HOMEWORK**

It has always been the custom of this Committee to use the regular order process to finalize offsets for bills and to iron out technical assistance from federal agencies.

This Congress has been no exception, and we've frequently used hearings and subcommittee markups to advance legislation while identifying areas for further refinement.

While some bills being considered today still have a ways to go, I believe that they'll be ready by the time they're included in Full Committee markups.

## **CLOSING**

I look forward to advancing today's bills and to reviewing them further in the Full Committee.