

Opening Remarks
Chair Brett Guthrie
Health Subcommittee Legislative Hearing: Proposals to Support
Patients and Caregivers
February 14, 2024
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you to our witnesses for being here before the subcommittee today.

These bills are designed to promote greater and improved access to care for Americans and their families. They are complimentary to our work on lowering health care costs for all Americans. We're considering legislation that will continue programs to detect, diagnose, and treat chronic diseases and health conditions at earlier stages, improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, help ensure Americans in rural communities have access to life-saving care, and provide additional resources to assist in the development of cutting-edge treatments for debilitating health conditions. Today's hearing will help inform our policymaking as we explore how current programs are working and if any gaps exist that may need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of life for millions of patients across the country.

For example, my bipartisan bill, H.R. 7218, the Building Our Largest Dementia Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Reauthorization Act or "BOLD Act" would continue programming to ensure individuals living with Alzheimer's have access to the highest quality of health care while building on efforts to identify and diagnose the disease sooner.

The BOLD Reauthorization Act also helps to facilitate educational resources for caregivers to help ease the challenges for those caring for loved ones with this vicious disease. These continued investments are especially critical now that we have treatments to slow the progression of Alzheimer's. These advancements will help to ensure patients and their families have more precious time to spend with one another. I would like to thank Representative Tonko for leading this legislation with me, and I look forward to working to get this important bill reauthorized this year.

Another critical bill we are considering today is the Charlotte Woodward Organ Transplant Discrimination Prevention Act, led by Representatives Cammack and Dingell, which will prohibit health care providers and other entities from denying or restricting an individual's access to organ transplants solely on the basis of the individual's disability.. This builds on the work we did last week, led by Chair Rodgers, who has been a champion for individuals with disabilities, by passing the Protecting Health Care for All Patients Act out of the House of Representatives to help ensure individuals with disabilities are treated fairly and are able to access the treatments they need.

We'll also consider the DeOndra Dixon INCLUDE Project Act of 2024, which will authorize current programs at the National Institutes of Health to continue cutting-edge research on Down Syndrome, address gaps in current research and initiatives, and examine co-occurring conditions associated with Down syndrome. The INCUDE Project will continue to facilitate improved coordination across NIH and build upon research that will improve the quality of life for those living with Down Syndrome. Other bills being considered today are designed to provide access to care for individuals in rural communities as

well as diagnose potentially fatal, yet treatable chronic diseases, such as heart disease and certain cancers. The SIREN Reauthorization Act, led by Representative David Joyce, will continue resources for rural emergency medical providers to ensure they can maintain their essential services. H.R. 7189 will reauthorize programs to help address gaps in care for individuals with congenital heart disease. Efforts such as this have helped to ensure over 90% of kids who are diagnosed with congenital heart disease live well into adulthood.

Many of the bills we are considering today will promote greater access to care, facilitate earlier detection, diagnosis, and interventions, and help individuals live a longer and healthier life.

Thanks to all of my colleagues who worked hard to get the legislation before us today introduced and for their leadership on these policies. I yield back.