

Chairman Brett Guthrie Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Health
Legislative Proposals to Support Patient Access to Medicare Services
Thursday, January 8, 2026 – 10:15 AM

As prepared for delivery.

Thank you, Chairman Griffith. And thank you to all of the witnesses for being here today.

Today's hearing will explore potential solutions to strengthen the Medicare program and enhance seniors' access to care.

For example, in 2014, Congress enacted the Protecting Access to Medicare Act, which reformed Medicare payments for lab services, but it has become clear the law is not exactly operating as intended and Congress has frequently modified or delayed aspects of these reforms.

Today, the Subcommittee will examine potential solutions for payment stability and consistency for lab services, encourage innovation in diagnostic lab testing, and protect seniors' ability to receive these services—all while ensuring federal taxpayers' dollars are used responsibly and sustainably.

The Subcommittee will also hear testimony about several bills related to durable medical equipment, or DME, and home infusion therapy. These are critical items and services for seniors, particularly for beneficiaries in rural and underserved areas.

We will also examine the WISeR Model, which is focused on promoting high-quality care for Medicare beneficiaries by ensuring that certain services are provided in alignment with existing CMS coverage policies.

While I know many patients and providers have frustrations with the traditional prior authorization processes, I also appreciate that our current Medicare spending trajectory is unsustainable. CMMI was created for the express reason of trying new payment models that might make our health care programs more efficient and effective. Therefore, we must think creatively to see how CMMI can harness cutting edge technologies that aim to help beneficiaries avoid unnecessary care.

Despite these reservations, I look forward to a robust discussion on all of the bills before us today.

But our work cannot just end here. As we look forward to all of the important work we have for this coming year, we need to take a broad examination of health care costs. As Members of this Committee know well, we don't shy away from tackling tough issues within our wide-ranging jurisdiction. I am pleased to announce that over the next few months we will hold a series of hearings to examine health care affordability.

While some want to talk solely about a small subset of the population, I believe we have to take a broader look at what is truly driving rising costs for ALL Americans.

On January 22nd, we will hold a Health Subcommittee hearing with CEOs of some of the largest insurance companies representing a cross-section of the marketplace. I am hopeful that we can have a productive discussion about what is truly driving increased health care costs and premiums. From there, we need to look at the entire health care system, why prices and costs are going up, and what we can do—hopefully much of it in a bipartisan way—to address these issues. We

have the greatest health care system in the world—we just need to examine how we can make it more affordable for ALL Americans.

I thank the witnesses for their participation and I yield back.