

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Hearing on “Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans: An Examination of the
Prescription Drug Supply Chain”***

February 11, 2026

Once again, the Health Subcommittee is meeting today to examine health care affordability, while Republicans sit by and refuse to address one key way to lower health care costs: extending the Affordable Care Act’s enhanced premium tax credits to lower monthly health insurance premiums for millions of Americans.

The truth is Republicans are holding this hearing because they have no real plan to lower health costs or improve quality of care. They spent the last year creating a health crisis, taking health care coverage away from 15 million people, raising costs for millions more, and slashing \$1 trillion dollars in health funding in their Big Ugly Bill.

Their signature bill will not only result in massive benefit cuts, higher prices for patients, and hospitals closing their doors, but it will also increase drug prices for seniors. Hidden in the fine print of the Big Ugly Bill was a new loophole to allow massive blockbuster drugs such as Keytruda to avoid Medicare price negotiations. This was a \$9 billion Republican handout to the pharmaceutical industry, tucked away in the Big Ugly Bill. Make no mistake: Republicans knew what they were doing when they prioritized Big Pharma’s profits over patients – patients who will be forced to pay higher prices for lifesaving drugs for years to come.

Instead of working together to lower costs, it appears that Republicans’ goal for today’s hearing is to allow different players in the pharmaceutical drug supply chain to point blame at each other while this Committee does nothing to actually help lower health care costs for everyday Americans.

It is also worth noting that Republicans denied Democrats’ request to include a witness who could represent a patient’s perspective, ignoring the one in seven Americans who have been forced to cut their pills in half or skipped doses of their medication due to the cost in the last year. That’s a shame.

Republicans have also stood by and allowed the Trump Administration to undermine our nation’s health agencies charged with protecting Americans. Time and again, Republicans have done nothing to stop Trump and RFK Jr.’s attacks on lifesaving medical research and innovation, putting new cures and treatments out of reach for millions of people. They’ve sat back and watched as billions of dollars in scientific research funding has been cut, frozen, or terminated. And they’ve allowed RFK Jr.’s quack science to run rampant – decimating people’s trust in vaccines.

Now, we are facing the worst measles epidemic in three decades on President Trump's watch. This Committee should be doing important bipartisan oversight of the growing measles crisis and the federal government's response. Shockingly, the new head of CDC says that the rising cases are, "just the cost of doing business." Kids getting sick from preventable diseases, hospitalized and even dying is just "the cost of doing business" under the Trump Administration.

Undoubtedly, these devastating actions will negatively impact health care access, affordability and our nation's public health for decades to come, long after this Administration has gone.

If we want to address prescription drug affordability, we should build on the successes of the Inflation Reduction Act. It took Democrats more than 20 years to finally beat back Big Pharma and Republicans to empower Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices for America's seniors. As of January 1st, seniors have access to these lower, negotiated prices. This year alone, seniors are expected to save about \$1.5 billion in out-of-pocket expenses, and not one Republican supported this law.

If Republicans are really interested in making prescription drugs more affordable, they would support my legislation to extend negotiated drug prices to everyone with private health care coverage. The Lowering Drug Costs for American Families Act also caps out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs for more Americans and further prevents unfair price hikes for drugs already on the market.

These are real solutions that stand in stark contrast to the secret deals the Trump Administration is making with the pharmaceutical industry that do nothing to lower costs. Democrats stand ready to continue our efforts to lower drug prices and deliver savings to the American people. I urge my Republican colleagues to join us.

Thank you, and I yield back