

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 U.S.
Provider Landscape”***

March 18, 2026

Today, Committee Republicans are holding yet another hearing that is purportedly about lowering health care costs for all Americans—yet they continue to actively make the affordability crisis of their own making even worse.

Republicans are hoping the American people will forget that last year they cut more than a trillion dollars from the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid, and Medicare with their Big Ugly Bill so they could give giant tax breaks to billionaires who don't need them. And now, of course, when I'm home, my constituents are saying that these health care cuts are helping pay for an irresponsible war in Iran. And they're right. And they say that instead of paying billions of dollars a day for an irresponsible war in Iran, we should have taken that money and used it to help people with their health care and give them the premium tax credits, and they're right about that, too.

These cuts mean 15 million people are losing their health insurance, and tens of millions more saw their out-of-pocket costs skyrocket at the beginning of this year. Instead of doing something to help the situation, like unwinding their draconian cuts and extending the ACA enhanced premium tax credits, Republicans are holding affordability hearings in an attempt to show they care. It is nothing but talk. As Americans watch the doctor's offices and hospitals in their communities shut off critical services like labor and delivery units, or even close their doors altogether, Congressional Republicans are doing absolutely nothing to fix the problem.

Worse yet, Republicans and the Trump Administration are doubling down on their Big Ugly Bill and making even more health care cuts.

After Republicans refused to extend the ACA tax credits that made comprehensive health coverage affordable for more than 20 million low- and middle-income Americans, the Trump Administration proposed new rules to increase costs even further by proposing to increase the amount that insurance companies charge people. The Administration's proposed rule would raise deductibles for many families to \$31,200—that's as much as 75 percent of household income for many of the people eligible to purchase this coverage. That means, for the health care providers sitting in front of us today, uncompensated care is going to go up even more because Americans are simply not going to be able to afford insurance and will be forced instead to once again rely on emergency rooms for care. And Republicans have wanted to take us back to the days before the ACA. The chairman said, the ACA is still out there, but if you can't buy the policy or you can't afford the deductible, you're going back to the days when there was no

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ACA, where Americans were skipping care that they need and instead come to health care providers sicker and more desperate. And it's going to leave millions of Americans buried in medical debt. That's the other thing that will force even more providers to close their doors.

The Trump Administration and Republicans are also doubling down on Medicaid cuts.

In their latest crusade, the Administration has acted to withhold and defer as much as thirty percent of all federal Medicaid funding to Minnesota – cutting funding for home- and community-based care that seniors and disabled people, including disabled children, rely on to live healthy lives in their communities instead of institutions. Substance use disorder services would also be cut that help people recover. Support services for children with autism would also be cut.

But this isn't just about Minnesota. Dr. Oz and Vice President Vance have been clear that they are on a state-by-state crusade to cut funding for services seniors and people with disabilities rely on. And, Committee Republicans are piling on— sending their own letters attacking Medicaid funding for similar services in 10 states. I ask unanimous consent to insert into the record letters from organizations representing seniors, people with disabilities, and others who rely on these services, begging Republicans to stop this assault on their health care.

I am tired of Republicans using these hearings as an attempt to show they care about health care affordability when they created this health care affordability crisis in the first place and are making it worse. You are not fooling the American people – they know Republicans are to blame for skyrocketing health care costs, millions losing their coverage, and hospitals closing their doors.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.