

Committee on Energy and Commerce

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

Markup of 10 Bills, Subcommittee on Health

May 13, 2026

Today, we are considering bipartisan legislation to reauthorize public health programs that improve Americans' health, spur biomedical innovation, and sustain critical research. These programs are components of our public health infrastructure that help keep Americans healthy, from cancer screening programs to disease surveillance networks.

Before I discuss this markup, I want to raise concerns about the Trump Administration's troubling leadership of our public health agencies. The Hantavirus outbreak comes at a time when the Trump Administration has pulled the United States out of the World Health Organization; the CDC has lost a quarter of its staff and has no Senate-confirmed leadership, and HHS fired every full-time employee at a program to assist the cruise industry in preventing and controlling the spread of illnesses on cruise ships.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) continues to drag its feet in getting critical biomedical funding out the door. Grant funding from NIH to our biomedical researchers is down 44 percent in fiscal year 2026, compared to the four-year average from 2021 through 2024. Whether the slow pace of grant disbursements results from malice or incompetence is unclear, but what is clear is that this cannot continue.

Yesterday, Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Makary resigned after a tenure that was marked by chaos, confusion, and potential corruption.

And Trump and Congressional Republicans are making the affordability crisis worse by cutting trillions from Americans' health care while refusing to extend subsidies that make health care more affordable for American families. Prices for basic necessities including health care, gas, utility bills, and groceries continue to skyrocket while Republicans do absolutely nothing.

Turning to this markup, I am pleased we are considering the School-Based Health Centers Reauthorization Act, led by Representative Tonko, which brings health care directly into schools. Students can access primary care, mental health care, case management, dental care, and nutrition education right at school. This reduces many barriers to care, including transportation challenges and a lack of a primary care doctor.

The EARLY Act Reauthorization, H.R. 4541, led by Rep. Wasserman-Shultz, to address breast cancer in women under 50. About 16 percent of all new breast cancer cases occur in women younger than 50, where it's likely to be found at a later stage and often more aggressive

and harder to treat. This program supports CDC-led education and outreach to close detection gaps, empower women to take early action, and ultimately save lives.

We are also marking up the “ACT for ALS” Act. Last month, we heard from the co-founders of I AM ALS, Brian Wallach and Sandra Abrevaya, on the importance of this law to patients, caregivers, and researchers, especially for advancing scientific understanding of ALS and other rare neurodegenerative diseases. As we work toward reauthorization, we hope to address some of the concerns raised in a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, including ensuring that the FDA has the funds to operate the Rare Neurodegenerative Disease Grant Program.

We are also considering the Destruction of Hazardous Imports Act, which would provide the FDA with important authorities to protect Americans from harmful products. This bill would grant the FDA the authority to require importers to destroy products that pose a significant public health concern, preventing them from being shipped to another port of entry. These products have included food contaminated with Salmonella, Listeria, and carcinogenic unapproved animal drugs, as well as misbranded medical devices. It also includes illegal e-cigarette products that are flooding the market from places like China. We need to make sure that Americans are not harmed by purchasing these products, and this authority will help prevent that.

We are also looking to reauthorize several other important public health programs to build upon and continue their success.

I look forward to advancing these important bills to the Full Committee, and I yield back the balance of my time.