

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Health Member Lizzie Fletcher**

***Hearing on "Examining Legislative Proposals to Reform Medicare Provider Payment and
Bolster Health Care Cybersecurity"***

September 15, 2026

Many of the bills we are discussing today are important pieces of legislation for my constituents and for communities across the country.

This hearing provides us with the opportunity to continue important conversations about reforming Medicare payments for providers and to discuss policies aimed at improving the security of American's health data. Many of the other bills that we will be discussing today are also important steps towards expanding access to care for people across the country.

While I hope that today we are able to discuss some thoughtful recommendations and ideas to address these issues, I once again caution everyone on this committee and participating, that these are not normal times. And we can't pretend that they are.

We cannot have this hearing today on legislation aimed at reforming our healthcare system without discussing the ways that this administration and this Congress has decimated our healthcare system and harmed providers with policies they enacted in the last two years.

I know how important it is to pass legislation that will address the cuts to Medicare physician payments and ensure that physicians are receiving adequate reimbursements that will allow them to keep their doors open and continue treating Medicare patients. In fact, it is one of the top issues I hear about from the physicians in my district.

But at the same time that I am hearing about this issue, I have also spent all of this Congress hearing from the many providers that I represent about the devastating effects of the Republican's "One Big Beautiful Bill."

Between the cuts to Medicaid and the expiration of the Affordable Care Act Enhanced Premium Tax Credits, it is estimated that nearly 15 million people will lose access to healthcare.

And these loss of coverage estimates do not even include the additional number of people who are forced to shift to healthcare plans that provide less comprehensive coverage because that is all they can afford, leaving many of them underinsured and also unable to access care.

When more people are uninsured or underinsured, this drives up costs. It increases uncompensated care costs and those increased costs are not just felt by the providers, but by everyone in the healthcare system, including patients.

Our healthcare system works as an ecosystem. If costs increase in one part of the system, those costs are incurred by other parts of the system. Providers are also forced to make cuts elsewhere in the healthcare system to make up for the increasing uncompensated care costs.

We have already seen providers across the country begin to lay off staff, reduce healthcare services, and even close their doors all together. And it is expected that these cuts to jobs and healthcare services will become even more drastic once more of the provisions of the Republican budget bill take effect.

And since the Republican budget bill was signed into law, the Trump administration has issued a series of rules to implement the provisions of the bill that go even further than the statutory requirements in the bill, further reducing access to care and placing even more strain on providers and our healthcare infrastructure.

With providers forced to cut services and staff, this means that it is not just those who are on Medicaid or who received the EPTCs who will lose access to care or see their healthcare costs increase, but it will be more difficult for all Americans to access the care that they need.

This will likely result in many Americans delaying or forgoing care all together. And when people delay or forgo care that is harmful for their health and the healthcare system as a whole.

For an administration that says it wants to Make America Healthy Again, their actions prove they are interested in doing everything but that, as they are not making us healthier by making it more difficult and more expensive to access healthcare.

While I welcome the discussion today on pieces of legislation that will protect and expand access to care for Americans across the country, this committee also needs to address the ways that their policies have cut off access to care and driven up healthcare costs for millions of Americans. I hope that this is what this committee will focus on in future hearings.