

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Greg Walden**  
**Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and Subcommittee on Health**  
**Hearing on “21st Century Technology for 21st Century Cures”**  
**July 17, 2014**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Good morning and welcome to today’s Subcommittee on Communications and Technology and Subcommittee on Health joint hearing, “21st Century Technology for 21st Century Cures.” I would like to thank all of our witnesses for testifying today on this timely topic.

When Chairman Upton and I announced that we would begin the process of updating the Communications Act, we knew it would be a difficult, but much-needed, process. I am pleased today to be joining the Communications Act Update with another important Energy and Commerce Committee initiative, 21st Century Cures. The communications and technology sector has been an enormous boost to our nation’s struggling economy, due in part to the high investment and innovation in wireless technology and other devices. As we craft the legislation to update our laws, it is essential to hear from a wide variety of people who are on the front lines of developing and using these types of technologies in all spaces. Their unique viewpoints and expertise will help inform our consideration as we move forward, as well as underscore exactly why we have undertaken these challenging efforts to revamp existing laws.

It makes sense to unite these two initiatives, as they are both critically important not only to industries that are crucial to the economy, but also for every person here. This is an opportunity to recognize the benefits wireless smartphones and devices can provide to improve an individual’s health and the health care community. We have seen examples of this intersection already, from wearable devices that track activity, to the use of mobile apps reminding users of their individual health needs, to a patient’s ability to easily and remotely communicate with their doctor through a telehealth device. The growth in this area has been remarkable; there is a technological revolution happening in the health space.

In the communications and technology world, there has been a good deal of focus on the so-called ‘virtuous cycle’ of technology; investment in devices and networks creates opportunities for app developers to create new and innovative uses for those services, driving demand from consumers, which then spurs further investment. The health technology field is the perfect setting for this engine of invention and development. As health care technologies proliferate, patients, doctors, and researchers will realize the potential for the technology, and as a result, demand will increase. Increased demand means even greater incentive for investors to place their bets on the technology, which in turn spurs the cycle even further.

In reading the testimony submitted by our witnesses in advance of today’s hearing, I was impressed by what can already be done in the healthcare field using the technology that exists, and what the potential is as we developed. In Mr. Misener’s written testimony, he describes how leveraging cloud technology allowed scientists to conduct an experiment at a cost that was orders of magnitude less than it would have been using traditional datacenters and infrastructure. This is exactly what we are hoping to learn more about today—how we can take advantage of what these companies are already experts at doing, be it technology or healthcare, and benefit everyone.

I hope that our diverse panel of witnesses today will take this opportunity to expand on the specific ways in which their particular organizations are contributing to this space and what opportunities they see for the future. While there are undoubtedly obstacles that remain before some of these technologies come to bear, this conversation is a good starting point and a way to highlight why it’s worth working through the issues that arise. I would like to thank you all for being here today and I look forward to your testimony.

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