

Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Rep. Jim Hagedorn (MN-01)

Thank you Chairwoman Delauro and Ranking Member Cole for allowing me the opportunity to testify today on the importance of cancer research and pro-life protections.

I was diagnosed with Stage IV kidney cancer in February of 2019. My illness was discovered through a routine physical examination - there were no prior symptoms. Thanks to the monumental advancements in cancer research that produced a treatment called immunotherapy, and the remarkable care I have received at Rochester, Minnesota's Mayo Clinic, CT scans revealed consistent disease reduction. In December, I elected to have my kidney removed, and my last scan revealed "no cancer detected." While I am not "cured" and will remain on treatment, to have even gotten to this point is a minor medical miracle.

However, like kidney cancer, many cancers are often difficult to detect, with patients exhibiting little to no symptoms. These cancers, more often than not, either go misdiagnosed or undetected until it's too late. I owe my recovery to the extensive research that led to the development and utilization of immunotherapy and other innovative cancer treatments.

Over this past year, millions of Americans have had to postpone doctors' visits and missed cancer screenings in due to the coronavirus and statewide lockdowns. As a result, emerging data is showing a large uptick in cancer diagnoses across the country; diagnoses that may have been caught sooner, saving patients precious time. I strongly support funding for cancer research at the National Institute of Health (NIH) and National Cancer Institute (NCI) to continue the advancements in technology and care that have impacted millions of Americans.

For these advancements to be accessible, we must remove the regulatory burdens to improve upon the medical technology deployment. Ensure the full repeal of the Affordable Care Act's 2.3% excise tax on medical devices, that was included as part of the FY 2020 and signed into law by President Trump, stays intact. Repealing the excise tax on the sale of medical devices by the manufacturer, producer, or importer ensures that we are able to protect medical innovations and allow these biomedical technologies to thrive in a free and open-market.

We also need to make sure that these technological advancements are able to be fully utilized by making permanent many of the temporary waivers for telehealth and digital healthcare policy and reimbursement. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the digital divide in America and how crucial telehealth services are in rural communities. Through preserving and protecting the telehealth flexibilities, we will be further able to allow for everyone in need is able to receive the best quality care, regardless of where they reside.

Lastly, it is crucial that the Subcommittee retains all of the existing pro-life protections in the FY22 bill. These longstanding prolife protections have received bipartisan consensus and should appear in FY22. These include prohibiting funding for abortions for federal employees, in DC, and overseas. It is important that the language and integrity of these provisions, which have been signed into law annually on a broad bipartisan basis for decades, are carried forward in this year's spending bills.

I am profoundly grateful that the healing hands of God, the Mayo Clinic and an innovative biopharmaceutical treatment made possible through pioneering research are helping me live the longest and best life possible. It is so incredibly important that others are also given the same opportunity to take part in other novel cancer treatments that best suit their cancer diagnosis. This would not be possible without the proper funding and resources to carry out the necessary

research that is essential for the discovery and advancements of future innovative treatments,
while preserving longstanding, bipartisan pro-life protections