

Rep. Joseph R. Pitts
Opening Statement
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on “Examining the Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids Act”
July 7, 2016 (10:15 a.m.)

The Subcommittee will come to order.

The Chairman will recognize himself for an opening statement.

Today’s Subcommittee hearing will examine a new discussion draft of The Advancing Care for Exceptional (“ACE”) Kids Act – legislation championed by Mr. Barton and Ms. Castor.

The goals of the ACE Kids Act are laudable – to improve the delivery of, and access to, health care for children with complex medical conditions served by Medicaid. I know we all share the goals and want to prioritize the needs of these children.

The Committee received robust feedback from stakeholders on the introduced bill. Many expressed concerns with the bill’s original scope, approach, and cost. So I applaud the cosponsors for working through the committee to address serious stakeholder concerns by taking a new approach in the draft we are discussing today.

Today we will hear from witnesses representing a diverse mix of Medicaid stakeholders –representing parents, clinicians, researchers, providers, and Medicaid directors. Every child is unique. And every state program is a little different. So we want to listen and learn about the ways in which children with complex medical needs are served by the Medicaid program currently.

Medicaid already provides a critical safety net for providing care for some of our youngest and most vulnerable patients. Yet, when a child is born with a rare disease or has medically complex conditions, there can be unique challenges.

In many ways, State Medicaid programs are already successfully leveraging the expertise of providers and plans to provide needed care for medically complex children.

Yet, we know challenges exist and the status quo can be improved. So, today we look forward to hearing from witnesses about ways we can increase options, reduce barriers, enhance analysis and better align incentives to care for these children.

Finally, let me just note that the discussion draft before us represents one approach, but clearly does not exhaust all the good ideas others may have. So, moving forward, the committee welcomes feedback on how we can improve care for children with medical complexity without disrupting the successful approaches already in place.

I yield the balance of my time to the Chairman Emeritus, Mr. Barton.