

**Opening Statement of Chairman Walden
Subcommittee on Health
“Examining the Drug Supply Chain.”
December 13, 2017**

Thank you, Dr. Burgess, for holding this important discussion.

As we all know, no one is immune to sickness and disease. This is, in part, why our committee – under the bipartisan leadership of former Chairman Fred Upton and Congresswoman Diana DeGette – championed the 21st Century Cures initiative.

For more than four years, members of this committee listened to patients, providers, and payors. Accelerating the discovery, development, and delivery of innovative drugs became a nationwide mantra for the passage of Cures. And I’m proud to say that *today* – thanks to the tireless advocacy of patients across the country and the endurance of members of this committee – we celebrate the one-year anniversary of this landmark bill being signed into law.

But our work isn’t done. As Dr. Burgess has said, “As we continue to build on the success of the transformative 21st Century Cures act, our committee must fully comprehend how each step of the drug supply chain process impacts consumers.”

He's right. And it is why we are here today – to learn from patient and industry experts and improve our understanding of the drug supply chain.

In order to fully appreciate the drug supply chain you have to acknowledge its complexity and ask questions instead of jumping to conclusions. I encourage members on both sides of the aisle to dismiss any preconceived notions and focus on how each stage of the drug supply chain impacts access and delivery of drugs. Listen to the complex journey – from molecular discoveries to patient deliveries – that one dose of medicine takes.

Now, I'll be up front: For me, this isn't a drug pricing hearing. There's enough rhetoric about the cost of drugs. But having said that I know that I have more to learn about the impact each participant in the supply chain has in the ultimate cost to patients. And we have no shortage of witnesses to question! As you can see, we have invited witnesses from each step of the process: manufacturers, distributors, payors, pharmacists, providers, and patients. I promise today's hearing will be an informative discussion.

On that note, I'd like to welcome to each of our expert panelists. I appreciate your generosity and willingness to participate today. And I yield to Mrs. Blackburn of Tennessee, who would like to offer a few opening remarks.