

**Opening Statement of Chairman Walden
Health Subcommittee
“Examining the Reauthorization of the Pandemic and All-Hazards
Preparedness Act”
June 6, 2018**

Since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the nation has taken important steps to fortify our health preparedness and response infrastructure. The federal government has recognized that we must foster development of important medical countermeasures in the event of a potential chemical, biological, radioactive, or nuclear attack.

Preparing for and responding to these kinds of incidents and mass casualty events requires the collaboration of all levels of government with hospitals, biotech firms, community members, and other partners – both public and private – across the country.

Recent, diverse threats illustrate the importance of our country having an effective and efficient emergency preparedness system in place. In the last few years alone, we saw the arrival of the Zika virus, last year’s devastating hurricane season, and the WannaCry malware outbreak. Looking ahead, I think about the prospect of a devastating earthquake “Cascadia” predicted to hit my home state of Oregon.

In 2004, Congress authorized Project Bioshield, and later in 2006, enacted the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA). In addition to establishing a strategic plan to direct research, development and procurement of medical countermeasures, PAHPA also created the Assistant Secretary for

Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and the Biodefense Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) within the Department of Health and Human Services.

Today's hearing will take a closer look at a bipartisan discussion draft lead by our Energy and Commerce Committee colleagues, Reps. Susan Brooks (R-IN) and Anna Eshoo (D-CA). Thank you both for your leadership on this critical bill.

This bipartisan bill builds upon our previous work to modernize our health preparedness and response systems, ensuring that we are well-equipped across all levels and government agencies to handle current and emerging biothreats, chemical attacks, radiological emergencies, cybersecurity incidents, and mass casualty events.

It's an important conversation, and I look forward to continuing our work today. Lastly, I'd like to thank our witnesses for being with us today. We look forward to gaining your feedback. This is a critical reauthorization that can have a tremendous impact on our country, and it's imperative we get it right.