

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Health Subcommittee Hearing
**“Building on the ACA: Legislation to Expand Health Coverage and
Lower Costs”**
March 23, 2021
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chair Eshoo.

Mr. Guthrie discussed some of the concerns with the 18 bills before us, and I do not want to talk about those bills further. These bills divided Republicans and Democrats in 2019, and I am disappointed we continue to focus on what divides us.

Instead, I want to talk about what we can accomplish in health care when we work together...

... and ask that we continue to build on our past bipartisan successes and lower high health care costs I hear about from my constituents at home.

[Health Care Wins in December]

With the fast paced, partisan start to the year, I want to remind my colleagues how this committee worked together to lower health care costs for the American people last Congress.

The December omnibus and COVID relief bill was large, and so you may have missed that it included the most significant legislation to reduce health care costs in over a decade.

The December bill included solutions we worked together on to:

... end surprise medical billing for patients, saving the government almost \$20 billion in the process by lowering premiums

... provide long-term funding for Public Health, Medicare, and Medicaid programs, and we fully offset that spending.

... improve transparency, so employers who provide health insurance for their employees have the right to find out the cost of what they are buying

... support for rural and underserved areas by increasing funding and providing more flexibility for hospitals in those areas

... provide funding so that Medicaid enrollees with life-threatening conditions can participate in clinical trials

...address drug prices by requiring reporting to HHS and closing loopholes that may delay competition

... and many more.

[Opportunities to work together]

There are more opportunities for us to work together and build on the great work of last Congress.

We can work together to modernize the Medicare Part D program to reduce what seniors pay for prescription drugs out of their own pocket.

We could also examine the drivers of health care consolidation, which contributes to ever increasing health care costs.

I want to hear about how the mental health and substance use disorder programs are working and how we can improve them, especially in light of the epidemics of despair made worse by COVID-19.

We have also seen breakthrough innovation in the last year for COVID-19,.

Let's work together to find out what lessons we can take away from that and how to apply them to find cures for other diseases like ALS and Alzheimer's.

... Lastly, we must figure out how we can be better prepared against future pandemics.

[Today/More of the Same]

However, the bills before us today show the Majority is choosing to go down a path toward government run health care, rather than have these important discussions.

Their end goal is clear: kicking every American off their health insurance plan of choice.

Whether it's employer-based, Medicare Advantage, or plans through labor unions, American would lose the few coverage choices they have left to make personal decisions about what is best for their families...

... and be forced into a one-size fits all government-run health care program.

Just last week, half the Democratic Members of this committee introduced the Medicare For All Act, including Chairman Pallone. We apparently will have a hearing on that legislation at some point, according to press reports.

And the bills today continue us down the path towards socialized medicine that Obamacare started...

.... expanding the use of federal taxpayer dollars to subsidize and removing patient choice by promoting the insurance the federal government thinks is best for you.

My hope is that we can get to work in a bipartisan way soon to lower costs, increase transparency, address the mental health crisis, enable innovation, and prevent pandemics.

Addressing just one of those issues could take months of work, but I stand ready and hopeful that we can get started on that in April.