

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Health Subcommittee Hearing
“The Fiscal Year 2022 HHS Budget”
May 12, 2021
As Prepared for Delivery

INTRO

Secretary Becerra, welcome to Energy and Commerce for the first time—and certainly not your last.

You are leading the Department of Health and Human Services through a critical time as America turns the corner of this pandemic...

... thanks to the historic innovation of the private sector and the Trump Administration’s Operation Warp Speed to deliver safe and effective vaccines.

Now the buck stops with you to provide clear and consistent evidence-based guidance as we reopen—including 100 percent of our schools—and bring optimism to America again.

HEALTHCARE CRISES TODAY

Mr. Secretary, after a year of lockdowns, fear, and isolation... our communities are battling the deaths of despair.

Communities are seeing record high overdose deaths.

Mental health emergencies have increased.

We know the pandemic—and top-down government decisions from lockdowns and school closures—made them worse.

It’s going to take our nation’s best and brightest in local communities, doctors, and the private sector... to fix these problems and deliver the healthcare solutions families desperately need and want.

Decisions made by the federal government or by politicians won't solve broken families and broken systems.

It certainly won't lead to **personalized** care for every person to have a chance at a better quality of life.

Which brings me to your lifelong advocacy for a single payer system and socialized medicine.

EMPTY PROMISES OF MFA

Medicare For All—centralized government-run healthcare-- is full of empty promises.

This is the reality:

Rather than provide certainty, it kicks roughly 180 million people off their employment based plans and raises costs.

Rather than modernize our healthcare system to empower patients to catch up to the 21st Century, Medicare For All would turn back the clock to an outdated, politically influenced, complete government takeover of our health care system.

Just like Speaker Pelosi's drug price control scheme... single-payer will destroy innovation for new cures and breakthrough medical treatments.

It will also limit access. CBO reported a "public plan might not be as quick to meet patients' needs, such as covering new treatments."

My colleagues and I aren't going to accept the empty promises of socialized medicine.

I'll take freedom over empty promises for free stuff any day of the week.

There's too much at stake as we crush this pandemic...

... fight the deaths of despair...

.... and build the new future for a modern healthcare system.

We should be taking action to make sure people can make the best decisions for themselves to find the best care possible.

Now, is the time. It's what people deserve after this pandemic. It's what they deserve 10... 20... 30... years from now too.

That's why Republicans are leading for more price transparency—foundational to restoring the doctor-patient relationship...

... Lowering prescription drugs costs without government price controls that discriminate against Americans with disabilities and diseases.

... And spurring more private investment for breakthrough cures and treatments.

These are the priorities that will lead to a better healthcare future and improve people's quality of life for decades to come.

Before you release the full HHS budget...

... we urge you to take that into consideration and put aside any radical agenda that makes a lot of promises but falls short on real results.

BORDER

Now, turning to President Biden's border crisis.

Illegal border crossings remain at a 20 year high.

More than 22,000 children are in facilities under the care of Health and Human Services.

This is a record.

We need to hear from you an explanation on why the administration has been slow to address—**and in many cases has been silent**—on the ongoing public health and humanitarian crisis at the border.

We need accountability—not more blame shifting between administration officials.

We received your response yesterday to our request for information related to the management, care, and treatment of unaccompanied children.

Thank you but many questions remain unanswered and we expect HHS—under your leadership--- to be more responsive to Congressional oversight.

We look forward to your response today.

CONCLUSION

From the immediate crisis at the border...

.... to the long-term crisis that will result if we don't modernize our healthcare system...

... you have a lot of responsibility as Secretary.

I want to thank you again for joining us. I hope this is an opportunity to build trust and develop a strong working relationship.

Thank you.