

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
Of
Subcommittee on Health Chairwoman Anna G. Eshoo

Hearing on "Investing in Public Health: Legislation to Support Patients, Workers, and Research"

June 29, 2022

Today, our Subcommittee is examining 11 public health bills that support patients, health workers, and biomedical research.

Eight bills focus on reducing disparities or increasing access to health care services for medically underserved populations.

About 20 percent of Americans live in rural areas and are less likely to have health insurance, live farther away from health care facilities, have limited access to health care specialists, and face higher risks of death from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke.

To address these inequities, we're examining Representative Ruiz's bill, H.R. 8151, the Building a Sustainable Workforce for Healthy Communities Act, which invests in community health workers to address workforce shortages in underserved communities.

H.R. 5141, the MOBILE Health Act introduced by Representatives Lee and Hudson and H.R. 8169, the Rural Telehealth Access Task Force Act introduced by Representatives Pence and Craig bring services to hard-to-reach populations through mobile medical clinics and expanded access to reliable broadband capabilities.

H.R. 8163, the Improving Trauma Systems and Emergency Care Act, introduced by Rep. O'Halleran, invests in trauma centers to increase access for the rural Americans who don't live near a trauma center currently.

Race also affects health outcomes. That's why I'm pleased we're considering H.R. 2007, the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Uterine Fibroid and Research Act sponsored by Representative Clarke, H.R. 7565, the NIH Improve Act sponsored by Representative Underwood, and H.R. 7845, the NIH Clinical Trial Diversity Act sponsored by Representative Kelly. These bills increase research into diseases and populations that have been ignored for too long.

I look forward to Dr. Bibbins-Domingo's expert testimony. She chairs the National Academies committee focused on fair representation in clinical trials and can explain NIH's vital role in increasing diversity in trials. Ms. Tanika Gray Valburn will testify about her patient advocacy work on behalf of African American women disproportionately affected by uterine fibroids, including our late colleague, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

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Another research bill is H.R. 3773, the Pediatricians Accelerate Childhood Therapies (PACT) Act, bipartisan and bicameral legislation introduced by two doctors on our Health Subcommittee, Drs. Joyce and Schrier. The PACT Act invests in pediatric physician-scientists and researchers, with a focus on opportunities for historically underrepresented biomedical researchers.

Finally, our hearing includes three bills authored by Representatives Curtis, Bilirakis, Hudson, and Trone intended to protect the integrity and security of the U.S. biomedical research enterprise from foreign adversaries.

Taken together, this is a diverse slate of impactful bills that will improve American health care from early research to patient care with a focus on reducing disparities and protecting American ingenuity.