

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Health Subcommittee 3.12.24
Opening Statement
As Prepared for Delivery

INTRO

Good morning, I am glad we are here today moving so many important pieces of legislation that will strengthen the health and wellbeing of the American people ... almost all of which have broad, bipartisan support.

This committee continues to prioritize examining programs set to expire, making changes if necessary, and reauthorizing those programs in advance of their expiration.

EXPIRING PROGRAMS

Many of the bills before us today reauthorize important programs that are due to expire September 30 of this year, and I am hopeful we can renew them in advance of that deadline, through regular order.

This Committee has a rich history of plowing the hard ground necessary to legislate, including our bipartisan work to ensure we are moving forward timely reauthorizations, as well as new efforts – like the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act.

I look forward to seeing all of these important initiatives be signed into law.

INCLUDE

I am especially excited we are considering my legislation to authorize the INCLUDE Project at the National Institutes of Health, which signals to appropriators that it should continue and receive robust support.

My mission of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities is no secret and is deeply personal.

At the time INCLUDE was established, Down syndrome was among one of the least studied and funded genetic conditions at the NIH, despite it being one of the most common chromosomal abnormalities ...

Now, INCLUDE has funded over 200 awards and helps to coordinate Down syndrome research and resources across 20 NIH institutes and centers.

One of the most incredible things about the INCLUDE Project is its potential ... not just to benefit those individuals with Down syndrome, but for all patients with that suffer from cancer, Alzheimer's, and many other conditions that occur often in those with Down Syndrome.

I am proud of this bill and the work the INCLUDE Project has already accomplished ...and ask for your support in helping everyone with Down syndrome – and their families – live their lives to their fullest potential.

My legislation, as drafted, increases the authorized level over what is currently appropriated.

I will continue to explore all options to ensure we are authorizing this program in a fiscally responsible manner.

That said, I would like to move forward with a voice vote today as we continue to work on how to best address the important funding for this program.

STARK & ESRD

Additionally, we'll be considering Rep. Harshbarger's bipartisan Seniors' Access to Critical Medications Act, which has been cosponsored by a number of members from both sides of the aisle on this Committee.

I know that there is more work to be done regarding technical assistance and offsetting any costs associated with the bill, but I am hopeful that we will be able to resolve those issues before consideration by the full committee.

We are also considering Rep. Carter's bipartisan bill, the KIDNEY Patient Act.

As we discuss this bill, I would note that Congress has delayed putting these drugs into the ESRD bundle in previous laws with bipartisan support, and just last week a version of this policy passed last week of out the Ways and Means Committee with only one no vote.

I hope my colleagues support the bill today and, if necessary, we can continue working on technical issues before the full committee markup.

CONCLUSION

I do not have time to discuss in detail the other important bills before the subcommittee today on issues such as Alzheimer's, heart disease research, and emergency care, but this markup is an example of how this Committee continues to lead the way in showing how to get work done for the American people.

I'm proud of what we continue to accomplish when we work together, and I look forward to furthering this important work with all of you.