

Opening Statement

Health Subcommittee Hearing: “Examining the FY 2016 HHS Budget”

Rep. Gene Green

February 26, 2015

Good morning and thank you Secretary Burwell for being here today to discuss the President’s FY16 budget proposal for the Department of Health and Human Services.

A budget is more than line items on a page; it is a reflection of priorities as a country.

Our commitment must be to protect the progress that we have made, and to make strategic investments so that progress will continue in the future.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of Medicare and Medicaid.

Since then, the Children’s Health Insurance Program was created to ensure America’s children have health insurance.

Most recently, Congress passed the Affordable Care Act, dramatically expanding access health coverage and high-quality care.

The Affordable Care Act took historic and significant steps toward laying the foundation for a better and more efficient health care system, and expanding access to coverage for millions of Americans for whom it was previously out of reach.

It also took important steps to restore the fiscal solvency of our health care system.

According to most recent estimates by the Congressional Budget Office, the Affordable Care Act will reduce the deficit by more than \$100 billion over the first decade and by more than \$1 trillion in the second decade.

As we have seen through the Second Enrollment Period, the Affordable Care Act has already succeeded in ensuring that every American can access high-quality, affordable coverage.

Thanks to the ACA, nearly 30 million Americans got covered.

These are people who would otherwise be uninsured.

We have made great progress, but the work is not done. I thank the agency for implementing the landmark health reform law and continuing to work with us so that we can build on these successes.

In addition to prioritizing essential services and programs, I was pleased to see that the Budget makes strategic investments to improve our health care system and clear the way for progress in the future.

This includes funding to support the training of the next generation of health care providers, national preparedness against threats to public health, biomedical research, drug safety, and mental health services.

The Budget invests in community health center services to support the care they provide to 22 million patients.

In their role of providing an accessible and reliable source of primary care in underserved communities, Health centers will continue to be a critical element of the health system.

The President's proposal takes a critically important step by including four years of funding for CHIP. Currently, more than 10 million kids get health insurance through CHIP.

Additional funding for CHIP must be authorized so that there is no disruption in coverage and States are able to continue operating their programs.

The Budget proposes to increase NIH funding. Since its creation, NIH has fostered remarkable advancements in human health. But for the past decade, NIH suffered from inadequate funding.

Without significant funding increases, the US could lose its status as the global leader in science and innovation.

Additional resources will help defeat our nation's most harmful diseases and ensure that the United States continues to lead in biomedical research and scientific breakthroughs.

The Budget proposal strengthens national preparedness for threats to public health, including naturally occurring threats and deliberate attacks.

It also includes funding to reinforce our Nation's ability to more quickly detect infectious disease outbreaks through a new Advanced Molecular Detection Initiative and maintaining strong expertise at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

These are just a few highlights of what is included in the proposed HHS budget and I look forward to hearing more about the Administration's proposal during today's hearing.

Thank you, Secretary Burwell, for joining the committee today to discuss the HHS budget for the year ahead.

I yield back.