



COMMITTEE ON  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
DEMOCRATS  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pallone Calls for Continued Improvements to Nation's Trauma System**

*Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following remarks at a Subcommittee on Health Hearing titled, "Strengthening our National Trauma System:"*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for calling this important hearing examining our nation's trauma system. Improving trauma care has been a longstanding interest of the Committee.

Whether it be a gruesome sports injury, an injury from an accident on the interstate, or a gunshot wound, we depend on our trauma care system to provide the services necessary to save lives and prevent disability. In the case of an emergency, no one should be forced to wonder whether quality services will be available. And we are fortunate to have access to some of the best trauma care in the world – ensuring access to quality trauma care based on the best available evidence.

However, gaps in our current system do exist. And, unfortunately, sometimes the determination of whether a person survives or dies depends on if the injury occurs near a good trauma center. I think we'd all agree, this is simply unacceptable. All of our trauma services should be world class. That is why I am eager to hear today about recommendations from a recent report that aim to strengthen our trauma systems to ensure that patients get the services they need when a health emergency arises.

In particular, one of the recommendations which is the subject of draft legislation being examined today, encourages the development of military and civilian partnerships by placing military trauma teams and personnel in civilian trauma care centers. I look forward to hearing more from our witnesses about the legislation's impact on our trauma care system.

In addition to ensuring the availability of trauma care services, we must also make certain that providers have the flexibility they need under federal law to treat patients in emergencies.

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Another topic of discussion today is H.R. 4365, the Protecting Patient Access to Emergency Medications Act of 2016. This bill would amend the Controlled Substances Act to clarify that emergency service personnel can administer controlled substances under a standing order from a physician Medical Director who oversees emergency care. I understand this would codify what is current practice across the U.S. and ensure that patients have ready access to important, and often life-saving, drugs in an emergency situation.

This bill would also streamline the Emergency Medical Services registration process and it would also hold EMS agencies responsible for receiving, storing, and tracking controlled substances.

While I support the intent of this legislation, I understand the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) wants to ensure proper safeguards are in place under this framework to limit the potential for diversion or misuse.

I look forward to hearing more from our witnesses today about how EMS agencies can and will ensure appropriate regulatory safeguards are in place to prevent diversion of controlled substances, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues, the bill sponsors, the DEA, and stakeholders to address these issues.

These are critically important issues and I'm glad our Committee continues its track record of working to improve the public health care system to better serve our communities and protect patients.

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