

Opening Statement

Health Subcommittee Hearing “Examining Legislation to Improve Health Care and Treatment”

Rep. Gene Green

December 9, 2015

Good morning.

Today we are here to review six bills aimed at improving our health care system.

But first, since this is (hopefully) the last hearing we will have this year, I want to start by thanking my colleagues on the Health Subcommittee, Ranking Member Pallone, and Chairmen Upton and Pitts, for all the work that went in to the bills that comprise our shared successes.

It has been an incredibly productive year, and this subcommittee serves as an example of what we can accomplish when we work together on behalf of the American people.

From the 21st Century Cures Act, which passed with overwhelming support in the House this summer, to the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act which repealed and replaced the SGR and extended funding for CHIP and Community Health Centers, to the dozens of public health bills signed in to law, to ongoing efforts around salient issues like the regulation of laboratory developed tests - the successful undertakings of this committee are numbered and significant.

None of this would have happened without strong leadership on both sides of the aisle, a commitment to bipartisanship, and tireless dedication of staff, House Legislative Counsel, advocates and the Administration.

Thank you all and I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish in the coming year.

H.R. 921, the Sports Medicine Licensure Clarity Act will promote the safety of our athletes by ensuring that sports team physicians and athletic trainers who treat these athletes while outside of their home state can treat their patients regardless of whether they are at home or away.

Many medical liability insurance carriers do not offer coverage for care provided outside of the state in which the provider is licensed, making it difficult for team physicians to maintain adequate coverage while traveling throughout a sports season.

This legislation will clarify certain aspects of medical liability and malpractice insurance for these providers to address this issue in a targeted manner.

H.R. 4152, the Cardiac Arrest Survival Act aims to increase the deployment of automated external defibrillators or “A-E-Ds” by providing a baseline of protection from civil liability for persons who own or use AEDs during a good faith medical emergency.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the value of prompt use of an AED during an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest, as the likelihood of survival decreases by 7-10 percent for every minute delayed until defibrillation.

H.R. 3441, the Accurate Education for Prenatal Screenings Act aims to advance the use of cell-free DNA prenatal screening.

The development and delivery of genetic and genomic health care will continue to transform the practice of medicine and improve the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of disease.

While I thank the bill sponsors for their commitment to the promise of genetics and improving care for women with high-risk pregnancies, I have some concerns that this legislation is overly prescriptive and premature, and that information surrounding these tests is not evaluated by the FDA for their clinical or analytical validity.

H.R. 1209, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act was introduced to increase access to maternity care services by creating a new designation within the Primary Care health professional shortage area (HPSA) designation.

As someone who represents an underserved area, I appreciate the bill's sponsors – Representatives Mike Burgess and Lois Capps – for their commitment to targeting gaps in access and ensuring women can obtain vital maternity care services.

H.R. 2713, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act will extend successful advanced education nursing grants to support clinical nurse specialist programs.

Title VIII nursing workforce development programs have a long history of success and bipartisan support in Congress.

Continued investment in these programs will ensure that we have an adequate nursing workforce in the future.

I want to thank Congresswoman Capps, the bill's sponsor and unwavering champion, for her work to reauthorize these critical programs, and for her long history of working to improve nursing workforce demand, education, practice, recruitment, and retention.

H.R. 4153, the Educating to Prevent Eating Disorders Act will create a pilot program through the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to test the efficacy of early interventions on eating disorders.

According to the NIH, eating disorders frequently present during teens or early adulthood, and affect as many as 25 million Americans.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and learning more about the merits of each legislative proposal before the subcommittee.

Thank you again for being here and I yield back.