



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
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Pallone Opening Remarks at Health Subcommittee Markup of Medicare Part B Legislation

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Subcommittee on Health markup of 7 Medicare Part B bills:*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Today we will markup bipartisan bills aimed at improving care in the Medicare program. Medicare plays a critical role in the lives of our nation's seniors and Americans with disabilities. The Committee's efforts to continuously improve this program will ensure the highest quality care to these beneficiaries.

First, I'm pleased we're marking up H.R. 1148, the FAST Act, introduced by Representatives Joyce and Griffith. Stroke telemedicine, also known as telestroke, breaks down barriers to care and is a valuable tool for combatting our nation's fifth leading cause of death. The FAST Act would expand coverage of telestroke services so that beneficiaries can get the right treatment at the right time, no matter where they live. When it comes to stroke – every second counts.

I am also pleased to markup H.R. 3263, to extend the Independence at Home Demonstration, which allows seniors with complex and expensive chronic conditions to receive team-based, primary care in their own home. This model reduces costs and barriers to access for vulnerable seniors while also ensuring that beneficiaries receive care where they feel most comfortable. Improving both the quality and comfort of care for seniors suffering from complex conditions is critical to the sustainability of Medicare.

I also look forward to more discussion today on H.R. 3271, introduced by Representatives DeGette and Brooks. Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes should have a choice in their testing supplies. They should be able to access testing strips compatible with the blood glucose monitor of their choice. They should also be protected by law from coercive practices from suppliers. H.R. 3271 would require stronger CMS assurances that suppliers carry a greater variety of testing supplies and make it easier for beneficiaries to switch testing supplies when they want to. This bill will improve the quality of service available

through the national mail-order program to the growing number Medicare beneficiaries living with diabetes.

We are also marking up four other bills that aim to make meaningful changes to the Medicare program by protecting beneficiaries, reducing provider burden, and improving program integrity. I look forward to working on a bipartisan basis today to advance these important bills to the full Committee.

Thank you, I yield back.

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