

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Opening Statement

of

Subcommittee on Health Ranking Member Gene Green

Oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services

February 15, 2018

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Secretary Azar for being here this morning.

This week, President Trump released his 2019 Budget Request.

Budgets are more than a numbers on a page – they are a statement of priorities.

Unfortunately, I believe the priorities of this Administration are wildly out of whack.

This budget doubles down policies that will hurt working-class Americans and jeopardize their health.

It proposes devastating cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, and public health programs, and yet again, calls for “repeal and replace” of the Affordable Care Act.

This dangerous budget imperils access to care for millions of Americans and puts our nation’s health care system at risk.

Three million Americans lost their health insurance this year because of this Administration, and this budget proposes to take coverage away from millions more.

Proposing to cut Medicaid by \$1.4 trillion is an assault on working families and would be even crueler than the permanent cap on funds than the TrumpCare bill passed by the House would have imposed.

It would implement harsh barriers to coverage for lower-income families and all together, the budget would gut the single largest insurer of children, enact an unprecedented cut on the largest payer for behavioral health, and threaten care for seniors in nursing homes, individuals with disabilities, and working families.

Repealing the ACA and cutting \$675 billion in health care dollars over a decade will take health care away from millions of Americans, raise costs and destroy Obamacare’s protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

This budget would cut almost \$500 billion from Medicare, shifting costs to seniors and cutting our health care safety net.

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It cuts more than \$1 billion from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at a time when a robust public health infrastructure couldn't be more important.

It is clear we have very different aspirations for this country, and what our healthcare system should look like.

The picture the Administration's budget paints is a harsh one- where more and more Americans join the ranks of the uninsured each day; where seniors face a declining quality of care in Medicare due to deep and irrational cuts to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy; and where working families, and people with disabilities can no longer rely on the safety net that is Medicaid.

I appreciate the opportunity to hear from our witness and look forward to answers to our questions.

I yield one minute to Congressman Ben Ray Lujan.

I yield one minute to Congressman Peter Welch.