Opening Statement
Rep. Gene Green
Health Subcommittee Hearing: "Implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act: An Update from FDA and NIH"
November 30, 2017

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Dr. Gottlieb and Dr. Collins for being here this morning.

Next month will mark the one year anniversary of the 21st Century Cures Act being signed into law by President Obama in his last public signing ceremony. It was a great achievement – particularly in a time of hyper-partisanship and gridlock.

But the work started long before 2016. In 2014, we set out on a mission: do something positive to boost medical research and innovation, and accelerate the discovery, development, and delivery of new cures and treatments.

After countless hours devoted to roundtables, whitepapers, hearings and drafts, Cures enjoyed bipartisan support and endorsements from over 700 organizations representing the full spectrum of stakeholders.

It dedicated $6.3 billion in new investments to support priorities like the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot, the BRAIN Initiative and the Precision Medicine Initiative within the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and to combat prescription drug abuse.

It also provides money to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to advance the agency's mission and implement the policies in the underlying bill.

This influx of investment is being put towards solving today's complex scientific problems, getting new treatments from the lab table to the bedside, and improving public health.

Specifically, the NIH was provided $4.8 billion in new funding to advance cutting-edge research initiatives.

The FDA was provided $500 million over 10 years to improve the agency's medical product review process and expedite patient access to drugs and devices without compromising the safety and effectiveness standards.

In addition to this much needed funding, there were so many provisions in this package worthy of support: from facilitating the development of new antibiotics to fight against superbugs to advancing the use of modern clinical trial designs to the fostering of the next generation of medical researchers.

While some of the provisions are technical in nature, the real-world impact they could have is not abstract.

Patients and families deserve to have their elected officials to respond to their needs and this bill was an earnest attempt to do just that.

Like all negotiations and compromises, we didn't get everything we want and there is always more that can be done.

But today is an opportunity to hear from the heads of the FDA and the NIH on implementation of things like patient focused drug development, medical device innovation, and improving scientific expertise and hiring capacity.

It has only been a year since passage and these things take time, but I know folks at the respected agencies have been hard at work to get new initiatives off the ground and build on past efforts to advance medical research and the development of new science.

While not the focus of today's hearing, Cures also included $1 billion to combat the prescription drug abuse and overdose epidemic.

This funding was significant, but pales in comparison to what is needed to combat this crisis.

There are more Americans dying from this epidemic than there were at the height of the AIDS epidemic.

I hope this committee and Congress can fulfill its responsibilities to the American people and provide real, desperately needed funding to fight this epidemic that is ravaging communities head on.

The 21st Century Cures Act demonstrates what we can accomplish when we work across the aisle, and I hope we can do so again.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about the ongoing implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I yield the remainder of my time to Congresswoman DeGette.