

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Health Chairwoman Anna G. Eshoo

Markup of 19 Bills

July 15, 2021

Today, our Subcommittee marks up nineteen bipartisan bills to improve the health of families across the country.

I'm proud of our Subcommittee's work to reach bipartisan agreement on these must-pass bills. Subcommittee Members worked together to tackle hard problems around substance use treatment, vaccine access, and the social inequities that result in poor health outcomes, especially for mothers and people of color.

Five of the bills we're marking up today help address the overdose crisis our nation currently faces.

According to the CDC, overdose deaths spiked after the start of the pandemic. In 2020 there were 93,000 overdose deaths, a 30% increase that makes 2020 the deadliest year for overdoses on record.

The substance use disorder bills we're considering today will continue the State Opioid Response grants that our local communities rely on to combat the opioid epidemic, while also boosting our efforts to address developing concerns, such as the increased use of meth and synthetic opioids.

We'll also markup seven bills that aim to ensure that every American, no matter their age, race, or income, are empowered to receive the "dose of hope" from vaccine protection. We've seen the life-saving potential of safe, effective, and free vaccines. But a vaccine that remains in its vial is 0% effective. That's why the bills today strengthen the Vaccines for Children Program, Medicare program, and programs at the CDC to ensure more Americans have free and easy access to vaccines.

Five other bills use public health data to address health disparities starting before conception, through childhood, and into adulthood.

We're once again marking up the *Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act* led by Rep. Kelly. This bill will fund and authorize data-driven approaches to inform health care professionals about the best practices and protocols to manage a mother's care in an emergency,

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such as when a mother hemorrhages after birth. This bill already passed our Committee and the House last Congress, and I hope this markup contributes to it finally becoming law.

Most importantly, our Subcommittee worked together to negotiate a long-term solution to the Medicaid funding cliff Americans in the U.S. territories face beginning October 1st.

For too long the territories have struggled with inadequate federal funding for their Medicaid programs because federal law caps their funding. Americans living in the territories often find themselves on the edge of a fiscal cliff that could send hospitals into disarray, lead physicians to leave the islands, and leave patients unable to get coverage for the cures and services they need.

That's why I'm so pleased we were able to negotiate a bipartisan agreement to increase the funding and the federal match for most of the territories for eight years, and five years for Puerto Rico. This long-term fix will give the territories the certainty they need to invest in their health care systems and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.

I strongly support this bill and I'm glad we've found a bipartisan fix to the Medicaid cliff for the territories. I look forward to passing this bill out of this Subcommittee and it becoming law.

We have a long, productive day ahead of us and I look forward to passing each of these important bills.