

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
Of
Subcommittee on Health Chairwoman Anna G. Eshoo
Hearing on “The Fiscal Year 2023 HHS Budget”

April 28, 2022

Welcome Secretary Becerra to your first in-person hearing with the Health Subcommittee.

What a difference a year has made. When you last testified in May 2021, our hearings were still virtual, the vaccination rollout was just beginning, and Congress had passed the American Rescue Plan only a few weeks before.

Today, over 218 million Americans are fully vaccinated. Covid hospitalizations and ICU admissions are at the lowest they’ve been during the pandemic. Premiums under the Affordable Care Act are at an all-time low and enrollment is at an all-time high. Nearly 6 million Americans have newly gained health insurance coverage over the past year and American families saved an average of \$2,400 on their health insurance premiums last year under the Affordable Care Act.

President Biden’s fiscal year 2023 budget request continues these achievements by helping American families rebuild from the COVID-19 crisis healthier and safer than before.

The budget invests \$81.7 billion over five years in pandemic preparedness, including \$40 billion for the development and manufacturing of vaccines, tests, and treatments, and \$28 billion to rebuild the CDC and the public health workforce.

Importantly, the budget provides \$11 billion to address the overdose crisis. President Biden has called for a whole-of-government approach to save lives, get people the evidence-based care they need, and go after drug traffickers to stop overdose deaths.

The President’s budget outlines a strategy to use \$20.8 billion to improve our nation’s mental health, including increasing the availability of crisis care and achieving full parity between physical and mental health care coverage.

The budget continues to focus on addressing health disparities. It invests in quality maternal health care, especially for Black and Native women, while also increasing funding for the Title X Family Planning Program. It takes the historic step of proposing \$142 billion over the next decade in mandatory funding, this is a first, for the Indian Health Services.

Importantly, the President’s request provides \$5 billion to the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), which holds the potential for transformational, advanced biomedical research to address diseases like Alzheimer’s, diabetes, cancer, and ALS. As the

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House sponsor of the authorizing legislation for ARPA-H, I believe your decision to place ARPA-H within NIH...let's just put it this way, I don't agree...with capital letters and explanation points.

There's still more to do. We still need a safe and effective vaccine for children under the age of 5. We need to make sure vulnerable Americans' health insurance coverage isn't disrupted when the public health emergency expires. We must continue the health insurance subsidies from the American Rescue Plan. And, we must finally allow Medicare to directly negotiate drug prices so that prescription drugs are affordable.

I look forward to working with you to develop a budget and policies to improve our nation's health and wellbeing. Thank you for your testimony.