

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Subcommittee on Health Ranking Member Anna Eshoo**

***Hearing on “Legislative Proposals to Increase Medicaid Access and Improve Program Integrity”***

**April 30, 2024**

Good morning colleagues. Today, on the last day of Care Workers Recognition Month, we’ll discuss 19 proposals to improve Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) and ensure funding for Medicaid is well-spent.

Medicaid is the largest payer of long-term support services in the nation, providing health coverage to more than 77 million low-income adults, children, parents and individuals with disabilities nationwide.

The American Rescue Plan Act, which Democrats passed in March 2021 without a single Republican vote increased funding for Medicaid HCBS by over \$37 billion. Every state took advantage of this funding to retain, expand, and train direct care workers who are the backbone of the long-term care workforce.

We must continue to build on that progress. President Biden recently said that “If we want the best economy in the world, we have to have the best caregiving economy in the world.” Several of the proposals before us today get us closer to that goal. The *Money Follows the Person Permanency Act of 2024*, introduced by Reps. Dingell (D-MI) and Balderson (R-OH), makes permanent the Money Follows the Person demonstration, a critical program to provide enhanced federal funds to states to help seniors and people with disabilities move from institutions to the community.

The *Stop Unfair Medicaid Recoveries Act*, introduced by Rep. Schakowsky (D-IL), and the *Protecting Married Seniors from Impoverishment Act of 2024*, introduced by Reps. Dingell (D-MI) and James (R-MI), end the outdated systems that keep Medicaid beneficiaries who need long-term care and their families in poverty.

Rep. Schakowsky’s legislation stops states from going after families’ homes for repayment of Medicaid long-term services. Reps. Dingell and James’ legislation protects spouses from having to deplete their financial resources to qualify for Medicaid coverage for long-term care.

Some of the bills being considered today are partisan and would roll back recent progress to improve the quality of long-term care. For example, the Biden Administration recently finalized a commonsense solution to the lack of staff providing care in nursing homes: hire more staff.

The new rule requires a registered nurse to be on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, instead of the current minimum of only eight straight hours a day. The rule also requires nursing homes to have enough nurses and nursing assistants to be able to give each resident at least three and a half hours of care per day. These requirements phase in for most facilities over three years but give rural facilities five years to come into compliance. It also provides \$75 million in grants to train nurse aides.

The *Protecting America's Seniors' Access to Care Act* by Reps. Fischbach (R-MN) and Pence (R-IN) prohibits this policy and stops any similar rule from ever going into effect. The Biden Administration also recently required at least 80% of home- and community-based payments to go directly to care worker pay. This will help raise the pay for the home health care workers our loved ones rely on.

H.R. 8114 by Rep. Cammack (R-FL) prohibits this policy and stops any similar rule from ever going into effect. I support the Biden Administration's recent rulemaking to improve nursing home quality and raise the wages of care workers and oppose both bills. Today's hearing is about the hardest questions a family can face: How do we take care of a family member at home? If that's not possible, can we trust a nursing home? How are we going to afford this care? I hope we can work together to find solutions to make the answers to those questions a little easier.