

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Health Member Lori Trahan

Hearing on “Combating Existing and Emerging Drug Threats”

February 6, 2025

Today, we’re discussing existing and emerging drug threats while one existing and emerging threat – unelected and unconfirmed billionaire Elon Musk – is creating chaos throughout the federal government.

President Trump has handed control of all federal funds over to Elon Musk. This is illegal. It is dangerous. I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record a New York Times article entitled “Inside Musk’s Aggressive Incursion into the Federal Government.” According to this reporting, Elon Musk has unilaterally seized control of the Treasury payment system which distributes more than \$5 trillion in payments annually, including for Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare benefits. He has no legal authority to unilaterally seize government payment systems and records and the private information of U.S. citizens.

I am extremely concerned by a recent article in the Wall Street Journal that Elon Musk has now gained access to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) systems which help facilitate payments and provide health coverage for over 160 million Americans. I ask for unanimous consent to also enter into the record the article entitled, “DOGE Aides Search Medicare Agency Payment Systems for Fraud.” Musk has already gained unlawful access to the personal information of hundreds of millions of Americans, and now their health care information—what medical conditions they have, where they receive their health care, and what drugs they take. This is apparently being done by some twenty-something-year-old lackeys of Elon Musk whose identities are being shielded from the public and who apparently only go by their first names.

Musk and his minions are stealing the American people’s personal information. For what? To benefit his companies? To go after Trump’s political enemies? This is corruption plain and simple.

And it is utterly bewildering and disappointing that my Republican colleagues are silent while Elon Musk sifts through the private data of our constituents. Silence is complicity. I urge them to join us in condemning these unlawful actions, and work with us to rein in the Trump administration’s actions.

Turning to the topic of today’s hearing: our ongoing opioid overdose crisis. Public Health experts and providers know that we must do more than incarcerate our way out of this crisis. They implore us to remove barriers to prevention and treatment programs for substance use disorder in partnership with other tools to crack down on illicit drug trafficking. For example, a public health success story is the widespread availability of the opioid overdose

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reversal medication naloxone and increasing access to fentanyl test strips are other means to reducing deaths.

Last week, the Trump Administration froze virtually all federal funding, stealing billions of dollars in funding for critical opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery programs.

Clinicians have been left wondering if they would receive a paycheck for their work. Patients have been left worrying about whether their access to treatment and recovery had been cut off indefinitely.

The Trump Administration halted \$6.5 billion in funding for programs that support a wide range of naloxone programs, treatment services, and prevention efforts. And it halted nearly \$1.5 billion in funding to conduct research on substance abuse and addiction to improve public health.

I am bewildered by statements from my Republican colleagues about saving lives while there are still real concerns about federal funding not getting out the door to help us combat the drug overdose epidemic.

And Republicans are also looking to undermine our efforts to combat the overdose crisis as they consider trillions of dollars in cuts to Medicaid so they can give tax breaks to billionaires, like Elon Musk, and big corporations. Medicaid covers nearly 40 percent of all people with opioid use disorder. Republican plans to cut Medicaid will further limit access to care for substance use disorders – leading to more deaths.

It doesn't have to be this way. At the end of last Congress, we negotiated in good faith with Republicans on an end-of-year package that would have reauthorized funding for the SUPPORT Act. This bill funds opioid overdose programs, first responder training, and enhances access to substance use disorder treatment. However, after one tweet from Elon Musk, the House Republican leadership went back on their promise and tanked the deal.

It is clear Republicans are not focused on addressing this crisis, but rather, they are abdicating that responsibility to Elon Musk.

Thank you and I yield back.