

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Health Ranking Member Diana DeGette

Hearing on “Examining Opportunities to Advance American Health Care through the Use of Artificial Intelligence Technologies”

September 3, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Judging by this committee’s schedule, you’d think that nothing pressing of concern was happening in our jurisdiction.

But there is.

Last week, President Trump and Secretary Kennedy fired Susan Monarez, the new CDC director who had assumed her post less than a month before.

Her offense was refusing to rubber-stamp Secretary Kennedy’s evidence-free vaccine policies and fire seasoned, respected senior CDC staff.

I don’t think Secretary Kennedy understands what these actions do public health and trust in the federal government, but I do, and I think most of the members here today do as well.

As CDC doctors and scientists are removed for following science and telling the truth, the rank-and-file people who defend America against disease are no longer going to trust the CDC.

My constituents, your constituents, and everyday Americans around the country are going to suffer.

Secretary Kennedy’s dereliction of duty and incompetence are underscored by over a thousand—and growing—HHS employees signing a letter demanding his resignation today.

I agree with them—he must resign immediately and if he does not, President Trump should fire him for doing such damage to institutions that keep Americans healthy and safe.

And we need to do our jobs.

This subcommittee should bring RFK Jr., Dr. Monarez, and others to shed light on this administration’s unprecedented interference in public health and science.

I believe we have subcommittee time on the calendar for next week.

Let's use it to get the answers our constituents deserve.

But today, instead of focusing on the concerns that all our constituents have about the destruction of public health in this country, we are holding a broad hearing on AI that was hastily put together as a distraction.

Mr. Chairman, my Democratic colleagues and I have been asking for months for this committee to do its job and provide rigorous oversight of HHS under this administration.

We have been asking to move critical legislation that we all agreed on at the end of last year that Elon Musk killed with a tweet.

And we have been asking for this committee to rediscover its sense of duty and initiative.

We, Congress, are not a co-equal branch of government.

We are the first branch of government; the American people's most direct expression of their will and where the Constitution vests by far the most power.

And we are languishing.

Between asking the president for permission to take the smallest action and refusing to ensure that the executive is faithfully executing the laws passed by Congress, everyone in this room should be embarrassed about this Congress's work.

I know I am.

In addition to the dismantling of CDC, biomedical research is slowing, due to red tape and political interference into the science that fuels our economy and our might.

And we have had just one hearing—a budget hearing—with a presidential appointee of this administration during this entire Congress.

Inaction in the face of incompetence and malice—that is how this majority is running this committee.

That is not how I would run this subcommittee.

When I hold that gavel, we will be energetic.

We will investigate the misdeeds of this administration, and we will follow our investigations where they lead.

We will insulate scientific judgement from politics and ideology.

And we will hold thoughtful hearings that lead to well-considered legislation.

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This committee works best when it does so in a thoughtful and bipartisan way.

So far, this majority has shown zero interest in either.

That can stop today if you'd like it to, Mr. Chairman.

We can come together and vigorously exercise our article one powers, as is our prerogative.

Or the majority can continue to abdicate its oversight responsibilities, and we on the minority side will prepare to clean up this mess once we hold the gavels.