

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

Markup of 15 Bills, Subcommittee on Health

June 25, 2026

Today the Subcommittee will mark up 15 bills. Some of these bills make transparency reforms that I will support, as I am always willing to work on policies that advance the ball forward for consumers and patients, regardless of how small or incremental. However, I want to make clear to my Republican colleagues that these bills are not adequate to address the issue of health care affordability.

The truth is Republicans have created a health care affordability crisis with their Big Ugly Bill that cut health care by \$1 trillion – the largest health care cut in American history – and by refusing to extend the ACA enhanced premium tax credits. Across the country, Americans are seeing their health care costs double or even triple in one year. Hospitals are closing service lines and facilities due to the Big Ugly Bill's hospital cuts.

While we are going to need to address this crisis, I am pleased we are considering the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act today. This bill represents the work this Committee has undertaken for several congresses, and that I led in the previous Congress with former Chair Rodgers. This legislation will empower consumers and employers with data on the prices hospitals charge and the rates insurers pay so that they can compare prices and save money on health care services.

I am also pleased we are considering several bills that will improve transparency of the Medicare Advantage (MA) program. These bills bring much needed transparency to the MA program by requiring insurance companies to report data on supplemental benefits, spending on medical services, and broker compensation. They also improve transparency of prior authorization.

However, I'm disappointed that this markup does not include a provider ownership transparency bill. This bill would require transparency around ownership of hospitals and physician practices, including for entities owned by private equity and venture capital firms. Without transparent ownership data, health care consolidation will continue unchecked, driving up costs for consumers and reducing access to care. I believe we cannot achieve true transparency in health care without ownership transparency.

I am pleased we are considering H.R. 8201, the Expanding Community Access to Health Services Act, which would require community health centers to offer behavioral health and substance use disorder services and provide funding for centers that don't already offer these services.

Finally, H.R. 7970 raises serious concerns, as with similar bills this Committee has considered in the past to mandate class-wide scheduling of a class of substances. These bills would have Congress directly put substances into the Schedule by statute, bypassing the eight-factor scientific and medical review that the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) normally requires before a substance is scheduled. Congress created this process for a reason. It draws on FDA and DEA expertise, includes a public comment period, and produces a reviewable record. These safeguards are designed to ensure that decisions with major consequences for medical research, patient access, and criminal liability rest on scientific evidence.

I would urge the Committee to withhold further action on this bill and simply direct DEA, DOJ, and HHS to do their jobs and engage in a science-based process to determine appropriate scheduling of these substances.

Before I conclude, I want to point out that a number of the bills being considered still have not received technical assistance from the agencies with expertise on these issues. We received technical assistance on some of the other bills only a couple of days ago. We also need more time to consider feedback from stakeholders on many of these bills. I hope that we can spend more time after this markup working on these bills before rushing to a full Committee markup on the policies that need more work.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.