

Opening Statement of Representative Anna G. Eshoo – 5 minutes

Subcommittee on Health

House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Markup on Maternal Mortality and Youth Tobacco

2123 Rayburn House Office Building

November 13, 2019

- Today our Subcommittee marks up four bills that will save lives and save patients money on their prescription drugs.
- First, we will consider two bills that will save the lives of new mothers. Each year, 700 American women die and 50,000 women are severely injured due to complications related to childbirth.
- If you're a black woman in the U.S., it is even more dangerous to give birth. Black women are three times more likely to die from childbirth than white women.
- This is shocking and it's unacceptable. It's also preventable. The CDC estimates as much as 60% of these deaths could be prevented.
- Our first bill will fund and authorize data-driven approaches to inform health care professionals about the best practices and protocols to manage a mother's care in an emergency, such as when a mother

hemorrhages after birth. It will also improve the quality of care that rural moms receive.

- This work was spearheaded in my District. Stanford's California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative has reduced severe health problems from pregnancy-related hemorrhages by 21% and has contributed to reducing the maternal mortality rate in California by 55%. I'm very proud that our Subcommittee will vote today on a bill to expand this model nationwide and I encourage every colleague to support this bill.
- Our second maternal health bill recognizes that to make real progress, women must be able to get medical care when they need it.
- Women are more likely to die of a pregnancy-related condition in the weeks following birth than during pregnancy or delivery, but many mothers in America lack health insurance during that critical postpartum period. Every year, thousands of mothers are kicked off Medicaid only two months after giving birth.

- Today, we're considering a bipartisan bill to give states the option to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage for one year. I'm pleased that my Republican colleagues support this policy, but I also recognize that we must continue to work to ensure the Medicaid safety net is there for women at this vulnerable time in their lives, no matter what state they live in.
- Our third bill takes aim at the leading cause of preventable death and illness in the U.S.
- Chairman Pallone and Representative Shalala's *Reversing the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act* extends restrictions on tobacco marketing, sale, flavor restrictions and fees to e-cigarettes, while also making the landmark change of raising the minimum age to buy tobacco products to 21 years.
- This bill will save lives. Raising the tobacco age to 21 will result in a quarter of a million fewer premature deaths for those born between 2000 and 2019.

- This is strong, comprehensive legislation that will reverse youth e-cigarette use and drive down youth tobacco use overall. Most importantly, it closes loopholes that tobacco and e-cigarette manufacturers have exploited for years to target young people and African Americans, including predatory marketing of sweet flavors and menthol products.
- We can't allow young Americans to be ensnared in a new addiction. We also can't ignore the disproportionate and deadly impact that menthol flavors have had on the African American community.
- During our Subcommittee hearing on this bill, there was a lot of conflation between e-cigarettes and THC vapes. On November 8, the CDC identified vitamin E acetate, an additive commonly used in THC vapes, as the "very strong culprit" in the vaping-related lung injuries.
- Let's be clear. In December 2018, months before the outbreak of vaping deaths, our Surgeon General said that there is an epidemic of youth e-cigarette use. He said, and I quote, "We must take action now

to protect the health of our nation's young people.” That was 11 months ago. I urge my colleagues to heed his advice. We must take action now.

- Finally, we will continue our bipartisan work to lower the cost of prescription drugs. The STOP GAMES Act lives up to its name – it stops the games that pharma plays to prevent cheaper generic drugs from coming to the market.
- It's time to do everything we can to stop these preventable deaths from tobacco use and maternal injury. I urge all my colleagues to support these bills.