

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

November 18, 2019

Sundar Pichai  
Chief Executive Officer  
Google  
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway  
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

We write regarding a disturbing initiative through which Ascension, the second largest health care system in the United States, has reportedly shared the health information of tens of millions of its patients with Google.<sup>1</sup> According to news reports, this initiative, called “Project Nightingale,” will collect and consolidate patient health data for various purposes, including to develop artificial intelligence tools.<sup>2</sup>

While we appreciate your efforts to provide the public with further information about Project Nightingale, this initiative raises serious privacy concerns. For example, longstanding questions related to Google’s commitment to protecting the privacy of its own users’ data raise serious concerns about whether Google can be a good steward of patients’ personal health information.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, despite the sensitivity of the information collected through Project Nightingale, reports indicate that employees across Google, including at its parent company Alphabet, have access to, and the ability to download, the personal health information of Ascension’s patients.<sup>4</sup> Concerns have also been justifiably raised about Ascension’s decision not to notify its patients that their information would be shared with Google or how their information would be used.

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<sup>1</sup> *Google’s ‘Project Nightingale’ Gathers Personal Health Data of Millions of Americans*, Wall Street Journal (Nov. 11, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

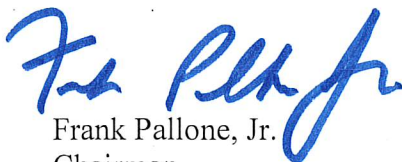
<sup>4</sup> *Id.*; *Google’s Secret Cache of Medical Data Includes Names and Full Details of Millions – Whistleblower*, The Guardian (Nov. 12, 2019).

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We therefore request a briefing by December 6, 2019, on, among other items, what data Ascension is sharing with Google as part of Project Nightingale, how such data is being used (including any use in the development of artificial intelligence tools) and shared, the extent to which employees at Google and its parent company Alphabet have access to this information, the extent to which patients were informed about the use and sharing of their data, and what steps are being taken to protect the privacy and security of patients' data.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you have any questions, and to arrange the briefing, please contact Manmeet Dhindsa with the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.

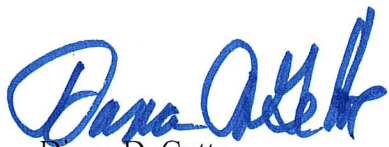
Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman



Anna G. Eshoo  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Health



Diana DeGette  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations



Jan Schakowsky  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Consumer  
Protection and Commerce