

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Joseph R. Pitts**  
**Subcommittee on Health**  
**Markup of H.R. 1344, H.R. 1462, H.R. 1725, and H.R. 2820**  
**July 23, 2015**

*(As Prepared for Delivery)*

Today the Subcommittee will consider four bipartisan public health bills to improve health care for newborns, infants and children, strengthen the National Marrow Donor Program and cord blood donation, along with a bill designed to curb prescription drug abuse.

As many of you know, one of this subcommittee's top priorities has been helping and protecting children and families. These bipartisan bills that are the subject of today's markup, represent our ongoing effort to work together to strengthen public health and solve problems in our nation's health care system.

H.R.1344, the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2015, authored by Health Subcommittee Vice Chairman, Brett Guthrie (KY) and Rep. Lois Capps (CA) amends the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children. The Child Health Act of 2000 first authorized newborn hearing screening and at that time, only 40 percent of newborns were being screened. Today, over 95 percent of newborns receive hearing screenings. This is essential for the 33 children born every day with hearing impairment – a common congenital condition. Once detected, the child can receive the necessary language stimulation and benefit from early intervention.

Secondly, H.R.1462, the Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015, authored by Reps. Katherine Clark (MA) and Steve Stivers (OH), will combat the rise of prenatal opioid abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS). Babies born with NAS often need to be hospitalized for weeks and can suffer from seizures and other complications. In recent years, sadly, there has been a steady rise in the number of overdose deaths involving heroin. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the death rate for heroin overdose doubled from 2010 to 2012. The bill will address the growing problem and help protect newborns and infants. Additionally, this bill has a Senate companion bill, S.799 sponsored by the Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (KY).

Thirdly, H.R.1725, the National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Reauthorization Act of 2015, or NASPER, is an important program that helps states combat prescription drug abuse of controlled substances, through prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs). NASPER is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services and provides grants to states to establish and improve prescription drug monitoring programs. This legislation will ensure states have adequate funding to address the needs of prescription drug abuse. It will help prevent patients from doctor shopping and abusing prescription drugs. It will ensure appropriate law enforcement, regulatory and state professional licensing authorities have access to prescription history for purposes of investigating drug diversion and errant prescriber or pharmacist prescribing and dispensing practices.

Finally, H.R.2820, the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act, introduced by Reps. Chris Smith (NJ) and Doris Matsui (CA), reauthorizes the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, which provides federal support for cord blood donation and research essential to increasing patient access to transplant.

The purpose of the National Marrow Donor Program is to help save lives of patients with blood cancers, like leukemia, lymphoma, and other life-threatening diseases through adult stem cell transplants. Every four minutes, someone is diagnosed with blood cancer. In most cases, a bone marrow, cord blood, and peripheral blood stem cell transplant is the only option for a cure. 70

percent of patients do not have a donor in their family and rely upon the national registry to find a match.

The National Marrow Donor Program in my home state of Pennsylvania has already conducted 2,159 transplants as of 2014. The Transplant Centers in PA include:

- Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia
- Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia
- University of Pennsylvania Medical Center in Philadelphia
- Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia
- Western Pennsylvania Cancer Institute in Homecare
- UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Pittsburgh
- Penn State Hershey Medical Center in Hershey
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- And Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

There are 930 donors in PA. Since 1987, more than 61,000 transplants nationwide have occurred through this program.

I support each of these bills and urge their adoption by this Subcommittee.

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