

Opening Statement of the Honorable Joseph R. Pitts
Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on “Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015: Examining
Physician Efforts to Prepare for Medicare Payment Reforms”
April 19, 2016

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today’s hearing is a sequel to our Health Subcommittee’s earlier review of the implementation progress of the Medicare payment reforms as included in the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) which repealed the Sustained Growth Rate (SGR) and replaced it with new payment models and other reforms.

Through a variety of incentives, MACRA encourages physicians to engage in activities to improve quality, patient experience and outcomes and reduce costs.

Prior to MACRA, physicians not only faced the threat of unsustainable cuts from the SGR, but a series of well-meaning but uncoordinated requirements stacked on top of each other from a variety of reporting requirements. MACRA seeks to consolidate, streamline and integrate these efforts into a single program.

However, rather than wait until CMS issues a proposed rule on how they plan to implement these incentives and program changes, there are steps every practitioner can be taking right now.

Physicians should be thinking about ways they can modernize their practices and participate in current programs to act as a springboard for their preparation for MACRA.

Provider organizations should be developing measures to aid their members and help MACRA’s goal of creating meaningful measurements that every provider feels are relevant to them.

Physicians should also start evaluating options available to them – whether the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) or Alternative Payment Methods (APMs), is right for them both for tomorrow and where they want to direct their practice in the future.

Our hearing today will examine options for ensuring the smoothest transition for our providers based on what we know today.

We expect to hear today from our witnesses who come from diverse backgrounds and training and practice from all over the country in rural and urban settings. Each are practicing physicians, in different arrangements and all have worked with their organizations to provide tools and best practices that other physicians can utilize and learn from to be better positioned to succeed under MACRA.

By the conclusion of today’s hearing, our Health Subcommittee will have held two oversight hearings on the implementation of MACRA prior to the issuance of CMS’s proposed rule.

As we have demonstrated in our commitment so far, the Energy and Commerce Committee will continue to be vigilant in our bipartisan oversight to ensure MACRA is a success. This will certainly not be our last hearing on the matter.

###