

Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Health
Markup on H.R. __, Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness
Reauthorization Act of 2018, H.R. 959, H.R. 1676, H.R. 3728, and H.R. 5385
June 27, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Today the subcommittee continues its important work on several pieces of bipartisan legislation that are vital to our nation's public health.

First, we will consider the discussion draft to reauthorize the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, or PAHPA, examined during a legislative hearing earlier this month.

PAHPA enables critical partnerships between the federal government, state and local authorities, and the private sector, to ensure our nation is responsibly prepared for, and able to respond to, public health emergencies. It's important we get it right.

As we continue to move through this process, I want to commend Representatives Susan Brooks (R-IN) and Anna Eshoo (D-CA) for their hard work on the reauthorization. Between today's markup and the full committee markup, we will continue to work with members on a bipartisan basis to incorporate their policy priorities and ensure we continue bipartisan support for this reauthorization effort.

Today we will also consider four important bills that strengthen the federal government's long-standing investment in the education and training of health professionals.

First, H.R. 959, the Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act, sponsored by Rep. David Joyce (R-OH). This bill will reauthorize nursing education workforce development programs that are critical to the recruitment, retention, and advanced education of skilled nursing professionals throughout the country.

Next, H.R. 3728, the EMPOWER Act of 2017, which will reauthorize health professions workforce programs, including the reorganization of the geriatric health professional grant program to reflect changes that the Health Resources and Services Administration has pursued to improve outcomes for geriatric patients.

I'd like to thank our E&C colleagues Health Subcommittee Chairman Michael Burgess (R-TX) and Representative Schakowsky (D-IL) for leading this important initiative.

We will also consider H.R. 1676, the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act, sponsored by our colleague Eliot Engel (D-NY). It's a cause that's near and dear to my heart, and one that I have cosponsored in the years before my chairmanship, so I am glad to see it come before us today.

This legislation will authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to award grants or contracts for Palliative Care and Hospice Education Centers, promote the career development of nurses and physicians in palliative care, and promote research and outreach in the delivery of care for patients with serious or life-threatening illness.

I've heard about this bill's impact from palliative care specialists and disease advocates from Oregon, like Dawn Frazier in Bend, Oregon, whose daughter Rhonda tragically passed away at the age 34 after suffering from early onset Alzheimer's. I'd like to submit for the record a Bend Bulletin op-ed that Dawn wrote about this bill into the record.

Finally, we will consider H.R. 5385, the Children's Hospital GME Support Reauthorization Act of 2018, authored by Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Gene Green (D-TX) and Subcommittee Chairman Burgess. H.R. 5385 will reauthorize federal funding for Graduate Medical Education at our nation's freestanding children's hospitals, building a pediatric health workforce to help ensure that every child has access to quality care.

These are important programs that make a difference in our communities. I'd like to thank the staff on both sides for their hard work and urge my colleagues to support these bipartisan measures.