

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup on Public Health Legislation: H.R. 2405, H.R. 1254, and H.R. 1852
July 28, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling today's mark up on three important public health bills – H.R. 2405, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act; H.R. 1254, the Synthetic Drug Control Act; and H.R. 1852, the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Support Reauthorization Act. I am pleased that we have come together on all three pieces of legislation to move them forward on a bi-partisan basis.

The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act reauthorizes and makes minor, but important, improvements to programs and activities first established in both the 2004 Project Bioshield Act and the 2006 Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, also known as PAHPA. These programs are critical in helping to ensure that our nation is well prepared to successfully manage the effects of natural disasters, infectious disease outbreaks, and acts of bioterrorism.

The Synthetic Drug Control Act adds specified synthetic versions of drugs of abuse to Schedule 1 of the Controlled Substances Act. These designer drugs can be very unsafe, causing convulsions, anxiety attacks, and dangerously elevated heart rates, among other conditions. H.R. 1254 will enable the Drug Enforcement Agency to take appropriate enforcement actions to get them off the street and away from our nation's youth.

Finally, the Children's Hospital GME Support Reauthorization Act continues the national physician training program that provides ongoing and consistent financial support to hospitals for the training of doctors who want to specialize in pediatrics. Over the years, this program has been enormously successful in reversing the significant decline in the number of pediatrician trainees across the country. Indeed, today, children's hospitals supported by the program train 40% of all pediatricians and 43% of all pediatric specialists.

As I have noted, Democrats and Republicans have worked together well to bring these bills before the Committee. We had some unfinished business to complete between Tuesday's Health Subcommittee markup and today; that additional work is reflected in the bi-partisan amendments we will take up this morning. I urge my colleagues to support all of those proposals.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to a very successful markup.