

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927

Minority (202) 225-3641

May 21, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Chairwoman Eshoo:

We write to inquire about the status of our request that the Committee on Energy and Commerce hold a hearing on the Democratic Medicare for All proposal. Since our request on February 5, 2019, there has been no effort to schedule a hearing. As expressed in our first request for a hearing on this matter, there are important questions about the proposal that this Committee needs to investigate.

During a hearing of this Committee on February 6, 2019, Chairman Pallone stated in his opening statement, “[w]e will address that issue,” with regard to our initial request for a hearing on Medicare for All.<sup>1</sup> We write to inquire about when this issue will indeed be addressed.

We have a responsibility in this Committee to investigate this proposal falling so clearly within the Committee’s jurisdiction. Medicare for All would impact all Americans. Given that Medicare for All remains a critical issue supported by over 100 members of the House majority, the American people have a right to be informed of how the House Democrats expect to address such a massive policy change.

On April 30<sup>th</sup> the House Rules Committee held a hearing on the Medicare for All Act of 2019, the Ways and Means Committee has confirmed the committee will hold a hearing, and

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<sup>1</sup> Energy and Commerce Committee hearing “*Texas v. U.S.: The Republican Lawsuit and Its Impacts on Americans with Pre-Existing Conditions*,” (Feb. 6, 2019) available at <https://energycommerce.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/hearing-on-texas-v-us-the-republican-lawsuit-and-its-impacts-on>

tomorrow the House Budget Committee is holding a hearing on Medicare for All<sup>2</sup>. However, this Committee has failed to be a leader on Medicare for All, even when other House Committees have taken the initiative to request reports on this policy and affirmatively state their intent to hold hearings on the Medicare for All proposal.<sup>3</sup> While the Republican members of the Committee oppose moving to a government run, single payer health care system as proposed by the misleading named Medicare for All policy, it is imperative that important questions about this policy be answered in this Committee.

As indicated in our previous letter, we are very concerned about the impact of Medicare for All on the federal debt. Medicare for All could increase the total amount of government spending on health care by at least \$32.6 trillion over the first 10 years, this is in addition to the current federal debt of more than \$22 trillion.<sup>4</sup> This situation would be exacerbated by the use of existing federal health funds, including the Medicare trust funds and massive tax increases to fund the proposal.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the impact on our federal debt, there are serious concerns about the 158 million Americans who buy private insurance or have employer or union provided health insurance as well as the 22 million of seniors and individuals with disabilities who have coverage through the Medicare Advantage program.<sup>6</sup> This program also targets coverage under the TRICARE program.

There are also the practical concerns of the impact of this Medicare for All proposal on taxes of individuals, including increased taxes for the 74 million individuals on Medicaid.<sup>7</sup> Other practical issues such as how this policy will impose long wait times and delays, even for basic

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<sup>2</sup> See H.R. 1384—Medicare for All Act of 2019 Hearing on Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 10:00 am, *see also* <https://rules.house.gov/hearing/hr-1384-medicare-all-act-2019>; Nathaniel Weixel, *Ways and Means Committee to hold hearing of 'Medicare for All'* THE HILL, April 30, 2019, <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/441406-ways-and-means-committee-to-hold-hearing-on-medicare-for-all>; Peter Sullivan, *House Dems to hold hearing on 'Medicare for All' next week*, THE HILL, April 23, 2019, <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/440278-house-dems-to-hold-hearing-on-medicare-for-all-next-week>; House Committee on the Budget, *Hearing on Key Design Components and Considerations for Establishing a Single-Payer Health Care System*, available at <https://budget.house.gov/legislation/hearings/key-design-components-and-considerations-establishing-single-payer-health-care>.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from The Honorable John A. Yarmuth, Chairman, H. Budget Committee to Keith Hall, Director, Congressional Budget Office (Jan. 8, 2019) available at [https://budget.house.gov/sites/democrats.budget.house.gov/files/documents/1.8.19.Request%20for%20report%20on%20single-payer\\_0.pdf](https://budget.house.gov/sites/democrats.budget.house.gov/files/documents/1.8.19.Request%20for%20report%20on%20single-payer_0.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> H. Budget Committee, *Budget Busters: Medicare-for-All* (Sept. 7, 2018), available at [https://mailchi.mp/2108767534cc/balance\\_budget\\_amendment-459029?e=7f4d75a21c](https://mailchi.mp/2108767534cc/balance_budget_amendment-459029?e=7f4d75a21c); and Urban Institute, *The Sanders Single-Payer Health Care Plan; The Effect on National Health Expenditures and Federal and Private Spending* (May 2018), available at <https://republicans-budget.house.gov/budget-buster/medicare-for-all/>

<sup>5</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Information Requested about H.R. 676, as Introduced in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress* (Aug. 31, 2018), available at <https://republicans-energycommerce.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/H.R.-676-Memo-Final-083118.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Congressional Budget Office, *Federal Subsidies for Health Insurance Coverage for People Under Age 65: 2018-2028* (May 2018), available at <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files?file=2018-06/53826-healthinsurancecoverage.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Haeyoun Park and Margot Sanger-Katz, *How 'Medicare for All' Would Affect You*, N.Y. TIMES, April 10, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/09/14/us/impact-of-sanders-medicare-for-all-plan.html?mtrref=undefined>

procedures and emergency medicine, delays on the newest drugs for cancer and other diseases, and the negative impact on innovation generally.<sup>8</sup>

Americans should know how they would receive coverage under this Medicare for All proposal. For example, Medicare and Medicaid recipients, federal employees, kids on the Children's Health Insurance Programs, workers and retirees getting insurance through the workplace, and those receiving coverage through ACA exchanges would all be moved into the new program within the short span of two years.<sup>9</sup> Although the bill references Medicare for All, it is not like Medicare at all and there are serious questions about how this new program will adversely affect and most likely ration seniors' access to health care services. A hearing is required for the Committee to understand exactly how such a program could be paid for and the impact it would have on each and every American.

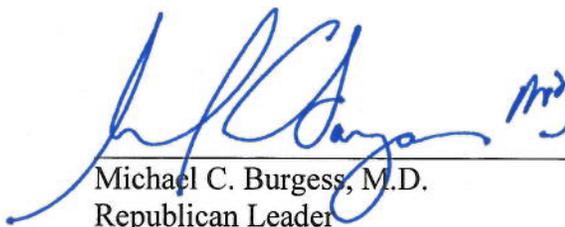
It is unfortunate there have been no efforts by this Committee to schedule a hearing on this important issue. Thank you for your attention on this matter, we look forward to learning the status of our request, and again call for the Committee on Energy and Commerce to promptly conduct a hearing on Medicare for All.

Sincerely,



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Greg Walden  
Republican Leader



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Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Health

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<sup>8</sup> See Scott W. Atlas, *The False Promise of 'Medicare for All,'* WALL ST. J., November 12, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-false-promise-of-medicare-for-all-1542066511>; see also, *Economic Report of the President Together with The Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisors*, (Mar. 2019) available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ERP-2019.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Grace-Marie Turner (President, Galen Institute), Testimony on H.R. 1384-Medicare for All Act of 2019 before House Rules Committee, (April 30, 2019) available at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/RU/RU00/20190430/109356/HHRG-116-RU00-Wstate-TurnerG-20190430.pdf>