



**Statement for the Record**

House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee  
Hearing on "Lowering Health Care Costs for All Americans:  
An Examination of the U.S. Provider Landscape"

Prepared by:  
Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing

March 18, 2026

Chairs Guthrie and Griffith and Ranking Members Pallone and DeGette:

On behalf of the *Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing* coalition, organizations representing families and health care consumers across the United States, we want to thank you for holding this important and timely hearing on the role of large hospital corporations driving unaffordable health care, and to offer our sincere appreciation to all of the Members and witnesses who are lifting up the impact that skyrocketing health care costs have on people all across this country.

Across the country, America's families, workers, employers, and clinicians are sounding the alarm: the cost of health care is too high, the system too complex, and relief is desperately needed. An estimated 72.2 million—or nearly one in three<sup>1</sup>—American adults did not seek needed care in the past three months due to cost.<sup>2</sup> When people in the U.S. do seek care, they are burdened with unmanageable costs and often forced to choose between basic necessities, such as housing and food, and paying their health care bills. Now, over 40% of U.S. adults — an estimated 100 million people—face medical debt they may never pay off.<sup>3</sup>

Our health care affordability crisis is largely driven by unchecked health care industry consolidation — **particularly among hospitals** — that has eliminated healthy competition and led to irrational and inflated health care prices that have little to do with the actual cost or quality of the care they offer.<sup>4</sup> As a result, between 1990 and 2024, health care prices, and hospital prices in particular, have increased by more than 500%. Hospital expenditures now account for nearly one-third of U.S. health care spending and grow more than four times faster than workers' paychecks.<sup>5</sup>

Policymakers have taken steps in recent years to begin to tackle this problem, including the recent passage of billing transparency reforms that will help ensure large hospital systems do not overcharge for the care they deliver in outpatient settings. Yet much more is needed to meaningfully address the root causes driving unaffordable American health care. **Congress must waste no more time in taking on the health care industry's anticompetitive behaviors and misaligned incentives that are driving up costs for families in order to provide real relief to the American people.**

We urge the House Energy and Commerce Committee to advance an agenda that prioritizes health care affordability for American families and holds corporate health systems accountable for charging excessive prices. Specifically, we call on your committees to advance the following well-vetted, bipartisan, and commonsense policies to remedy some of the most obvious health system failings:

- **Achieve meaningful price transparency in the health care system by requiring all hospitals to disclose negotiated rates in dollars and cents, establish standardization including a machine-readable format, eliminate loopholes, and enforcement of recently required hospital executive attestation along with increased penalties to encourage greater compliance by hospitals.** These efforts should include codifying a strengthened version of the Hospital Price Transparency regulation.
- **Address payment differentials across sites of service that financially incentivize further consolidation and help ensure consumers pay the same price for the same service regardless of where the service is performed by enacting site neutral payments.**

- **Prohibit anti-competitive contracting terms, including between providers and insurers such as “all-or-nothing,” “anti-steering,” and “anti-tiering” clauses in provider and insurer contracts; and “non-compete” clauses in clinician and health care worker employment arrangements, that, for instance, may interfere with the continuity of the primary care patient-physician relationship.**

These policies would set a critical foundation for reducing inflated and wasteful spending throughout the system and make health care more affordable and value-driven for consumers.<sup>6</sup>

*Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing* looks forward to the discussion today and to working with you to enact bipartisan and commonsense improvements to our nation’s health care payment and delivery system. We stand ready to support you in this essential and urgently needed work. Please contact Jane Sheehan, Deputy Senior Director of Government Relations at Families USA, [JSheehan@familiesusa.org](mailto:JSheehan@familiesusa.org), for further information and to let us know how we can best be of service to you.

Sincerely,

**Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing**  
 Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
 Consumers for Quality Care  
 Families USA  
 Health Access California  
 Pennsylvania Health Access Network  
 U.S. PIRG

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<sup>1</sup> West Health-Gallup, “West Health-Gallup Health Care Affordability and Value Indexes 2021-2024”, July 2024, [https://westhealth.org/news/new-study-reveals-more-struggling-to-affordhealthcare/#:~:text=Forty%2Dfive%20percent%20of%20American,3%25](https://westhealth.org/news/new-study-reveals-more-struggling-to-affordhealthcare/#:~:text=Forty%2Dfive%20percent%20of%20American,3%25))).

<sup>2</sup> Emma Wager, Jared Ortaliza, and Cynthia Cox, How Does Health Spending in the U.S. Compare to Other Countries?, PetersonKFF Health System Tracker, January 21, 2022, <https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/>. See also, Nisha Kurani, Emma Wager, How does the quality of the U.S. health system compare to other countries?, PetersonKFF Health System Tracker, September 30, 2021. <https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> Noam N. Levey, “100 Million People in America Are Saddled With Health Care Debt,” KFF Health News, June 16, 2022, <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/diagnosis-debt-investigation-100-million-americans-hidden-medicaldebt/>.

<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Berenson, Jaime S. King, and Katherine L. Gudiksen, “Addressing Health Care Market Consolidation and High Prices,” The Urban Institute, January 2020, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/addressing-healthcare-market-consolidation-and-high-prices>. See also, “Policy Approaches to Reduce What Commercial Insurers Pay for Hospitals’ and Physicians’ Services,” Congressional Budget Office, September 2022, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2022-09/58222-medical-prices.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers: Hospital and Related Services in U.S. City Average [CUUR0000SEMD], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CUUR0000SEMD>, January 8, 2025. See also, Drew DeSilver, “For Most U.S. Workers, Real Wages Have Barely Budged in Decades,” Pew Research Center, August 7, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/08/07/for-most-us-workers-real-wages-have-barely-budged-for-decades/>; Matthew McGough, et al., “How has U.S. spending on healthcare changed over time?” Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, December 20, 2024, [https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/u-spending-healthcare-changed-time/#Total%20national%20health%20expenditures,%20US%20\\$%20per%20capita,%201970-2023](https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/chart-collection/u-spending-healthcare-changed-time/#Total%20national%20health%20expenditures,%20US%20$%20per%20capita,%201970-2023)

<sup>6</sup> Policy Approaches to Reduce What Commercial Insurers Pay for Hospitals’ and Physicians’ Services. Congressional Budget Office. 2022. <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58222>