



Statement for the Record

House Ways and Means Committee
Full Committee Hearing with Health System CEOs

Prepared by:
Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing

April 28, 2026

Chair Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

On behalf of the *Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing* coalition and allied organizations representing families, health care consumers, employers, and workers across the United States, we want to thank you for holding this important and timely hearing on the role of large hospital corporations in driving unaffordable health care. We sincerely appreciate 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 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 three¹—American adults did not seek needed care in the past three months due to cost.² 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 be able to pay off.³

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.⁴ 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.⁵

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 the misaligned incentives that are driving up costs for families in order to provide real relief to the American people.**

To that end, we urge the House Ways and Means Committee to advance an agenda that prioritizes health care affordability for American families and holds corporate health systems accountable for charging excessive prices. The list below of pro-consumer reforms to the health care system are proven solutions that would put money back in people's pockets, are overwhelmingly popular with voters across the political spectrum,⁶ and have strong bipartisan and bicameral support in Congress:

- Prohibit health systems from charging Medicare more for the same procedure if performed at a hospital facility instead of a doctor's office, saving an estimated \$157 billion over 10 years.⁷ (84% of voters support)
- Strengthen hospital and health plan price transparency by requiring all hospitals and health plans to disclose their negotiated rates in dollars and cents with no exception. (91% of voters support)
- Prohibit anticompetitive contracting terms including between providers and insurers such as "all-or-nothing," "antisteering," and "antitiering" clauses in provider and insurer contracts and noncompete clauses in employee contracts that limit patient access to alternative sources of higher-quality, lower-cost care, saving \$3.2 billion to \$194 Billion over 10 years.⁸ (78% of voters support)

Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing and the undersigned allied organizations look 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, for further information and to let us know how we can best be of service to you.

Sincerely,

Consumers for Fair Hospital Pricing

Colorado Consumers Health Initiative
Consumers for Affordable Healthcare, Maine
Consumers for Quality Care
Families USA
Health Access California
Iowa Citizen Action
Pennsylvania Health Access Network
U.S. PIRG
Utah Health Policy Project

Allied Organizations

ACA Consumer Advocacy
AFSCME
Access Care Anywhere, Oregon
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
BLKHLTH
California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network
Children's Advocacy Alliance, Nevada
Citizen Action Wisconsin
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization (CCLARO)
Connecticut Health Policy Project
Consumer Action
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)
Doctors for America
El Centro, Inc.
Georgia Watch
Health Care for America Now (HCAN)
Iowa Citizen Action
Kintegra Family Medicine
Long Term Community Care Coalition, New York
Lupus and Allied Disease Association, Inc.
Main Street Alliance

Maine People’s Alliance
Metro NY Healthcare for All
MoveOn.org
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
National Consumers League
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Jersey Citizen Action
North Carolina Justice Center
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Organization for Latino Health Advocacy
Pearl Suite, California
Serving At-Risk Families Everywhere (SAFE)
Small Business Majority
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
Vermont NEA
Virginia Organizing
Tennessee Justice Center
West Virginians for Affordable Healthcare
West Virginia Center for Budget and Policy
Young Invincibles

¹ 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).)

² 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/>.

³ 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/>.

⁴ Robert A. Berenson, Jaime S. King, and Katherine L. Gudixsen, “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>.

⁵ 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>

⁶ https://familiesusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/102125_Families-USA-Online-Survey_Affordability_Final.pdf

⁷ Options for Reducing the Deficit: 2025 to 2034 (Congressional Budget Office, December 2024), <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-12/60557-budget-options.pdf>.

⁸ “S. 2840, Bipartisan Primary Care and Health Workforce Act: As reported by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions on November 8, 2024,” Congressional Budget Office, November 8, 2024, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-02/s2840.pdf>; “Noncompetes: What You Should Know”, Federal Trade Commission, 2023, <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/features/noncompetes>.