



COMMITTEE ON
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STATEMENT**

**Opening Statement of Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA), Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions Hearing:
"Care for Our Communities: Investing in the Direct Care Workforce"
July 20, 2021**

(As prepared for delivery)

"Thank you, Chairman DeSaulnier.

And thank you to my colleague Dr. Murphy for your remarks.

I find it ridiculous that even unelected bureaucrats are back to working in person before Democrats in Congress.

The *Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) provides an important source of funding for state and local workforce development systems that are tasked with addressing the needs of the community. The federal government does not have the knowledge or foresight required to dictate what states need. I believe we should err on the side of flexibility when designing and funding workforce development systems with taxpayer dollars.

Direct care workers are an important part of the health care workforce, and care for our most vulnerable patients. Their work is often difficult and unrecognized, but our health care workers are valuable and should be recognized for the sacrifices they have made, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We know there is an incredible amount of turnover in the labor market for direct care workers. We also know that most direct care workers did not pursue additional education after high school.

As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, I hope today's hearing can shed light on how Congress can help all workers, including direct care workers, gain the skills they need to improve their upward mobility and sustain a fulfilling career. New technologies and practices developed in the private marketplace are revolutionizing the health care field. We must ensure workers are not left behind.

The federal government has an interest in sustaining a workforce pipeline that recruits, retains, and assists individuals interested in finding the right career for them, including careers within the health care workforce. But Congress cannot fall into the trap of having hundreds of different programs, each devoted to one particular occupation.

This is why I advocate for apprenticeship-style programs. Combining structured on-the-job learning and classroom-based instruction gives individuals a low-risk option to determine if a job is a good fit for them. In the same way, earn-and-learn programs are another way to help folks find a rewarding career.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find innovative solutions to address the health care workforce challenges facing our nation. And I look forward to hearing the witnesses' testimony today.

Thank you and I yield back."

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