



COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Opening Statement of Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI)
Education and Workforce Committee
Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Health and
Human Services
April 17, 2026
(As prepared for delivery)

At a time when Americans are facing rising health care costs, declining public trust, and worsening rates of chronic disease, strong leadership at HHS is more important than ever. Under Secretary Kennedy, HHS is taking bold and decisive action to Make America Healthy Again. Health care is a critical part of the equation. Yet for too many families, the cost of care continues to rise while transparency remains out of reach. Patients and employers are too often left in the dark, unable to make informed choices about price and quality. That is unacceptable. Americans deserve clear and upfront pricing that will help drive competition and lower costs. This Committee remains focused on strengthening transparency and ensuring the system works for patients, not against them. And we are glad to have the partnership of this HHS to help accomplish those goals.

But access to health care is only one piece of the puzzle. Health begins long before a patient enters a doctor's office. It starts with nutrition, prevention, and daily choices. Under Secretary Kennedy's leadership, HHS has righted the food pyramid and delivered scientifically sound Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These are critical steps toward

building a stronger foundation for public health, particularly for children. This is also an area where the Committee has led. We restored access to healthy, full-fat dairy in federal child nutrition programs—ensuring children receive the nutrients they need to grow and thrive.

Health is also shaped by environments in which we live. Strengthening high-quality early childhood education and care programs that working parents rely on—and protecting them from waste, fraud, and abuse—helps create a culture of learning and care where our children can thrive. At the same time, restoring focus and accountability in these programs is critical to earning the public’s trust. Taxpayer dollars should support children and families, not advance ideological initiatives. This is particularly true of the DEI-driven mandates and gender ideology that have saturated our society. Policies that promote or subsidize irreversible medical interventions on minors raise serious concerns, both medically and ethically. Sex-rejecting procedures and mutilating chemical treatments are an abominable use of federal taxpayer dollars and tear at the very fabric of American society. I am very glad to see HHS taking steps to combat this and ensure that the well-being of children, not politics, remains the focus.

Finally, I want to commend the Department for also making America *fiscally* healthy again. The Department’s budget proposal reins in a bloated, unaccountable bureaucracy by restructuring HHS to refocus on core principles—all while saving American taxpayers \$1.8 billion every year. In other words, HHS is doing more with less. That is exactly the kind of governance the American people expect and deserve.

At the end of the day, this is about people: families trying to afford care, parents trying to raise healthy children, and communities striving for a better future. The policies we shape here have real consequences in their lives. We have a responsibility to get this right. I appreciate Secretary

Kennedy's willingness to take on these challenges, and I look forward to working together to build a healthier, stronger future for every American.