

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

Chairman Bob Casey's Opening Statement

"Health Care Transparency: Lowering Costs and Empowering Patients."

Good morning, the Senate Special Committee on Aging will come to order. Today's hearing will examine transparency in health care, and how it affects the ability of patients to access affordable health care. This is a very important topic as the cost of health care continues to rise. And it is clear we must do more, here in the Senate and throughout the Congress to bring down costs for the American people.

I'm proud to say we've made some progress, though we have more ground to cover, much more to do. Over the last several years, Democrats have passed several health packages to lower health care costs for Americans. Through the American Rescue Plan Act, Democrats reduced health care costs by bringing down the cost of premiums and expanding eligibility for health care coverage savings. I was proud to support the Inflation Reduction Act, so called IRA, which is actively bringing down health care costs for Medicare beneficiaries. It's also increasing transparency and affordability as the federal government, through Medicare can now negotiate prescription drug prices under the Medicare program.

The IRA capped insulin costs at \$35 a month for seniors. And then we saw insulin manufacturers extend those savings to all patients who pay out-of-pocket for insulin. The IRA also includes a provision that caps prescription drug costs at \$2,000 out-of-pocket each year for Medicare beneficiaries. This provision, which goes into effect this coming January the 1st, will save Medicare beneficiaries an estimated \$7.4 billion in 2025 alone. This is a lifeline for older Americans and shows us the opportunity to help Americans without Medicare who are still subject to high out-of-pocket drug costs.

That's why I'm introducing the Capping Prescription Drug Costs Act with 9 of my Senate colleagues. This legislation expands on the success of the IRA and extends prescription drug cost savings to the commercial health care market by capping out-of-pocket costs at \$2,000 annually for individuals and \$4,000 annually for families.

Nationwide, 173 million people under the age of 65 have private health insurance either from an employer plan or in the non-group market. This legislation, the Capping Prescription Drug Costs Act will ensure that prescription drugs are more affordable for these tens of millions of Americans. While we've come a long way to make health care more affordable and

accessible, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses, today and discussing how transparency can shine a light on high health costs and ways to decrease those costs for every American. I turn next to Ranking Member Braun.