**TO: All Clients**

**FROM: Center Road Solutions**

**Re: House Committee on Energy and Commerce Hearing on the Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2023 Budget**

On April 27th, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a [hearing](https://republicans-energycommerce.house.gov/hearings/the-fiscal-year-2023-hhs-budget/) on the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services budget. This hearing focused on federal funding for healthcare, especially mental health care, addiction services, children’s healthcare, and Covid-19.

**Main Takeaways:**

* Mental health was a large focus of the hearing, including children’s mental health and maternal health.
* Concerns of the current mental health and substance use crisis.
* Discussion of expanding Medicaid coverage for new mothers.
* Discussion of bringing mental health services to schools and community centers.
* Ensuring mental health parity.

**Opening Statements:**

**Rep. Eshoo (D-CA), Chairwoman of the Health Subcommittee (**[**Opening Statement**](https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/Opening%20Statement_Eshoo_HE_2022.4.28.pdf)**)**

President Biden’s budget outlines a strategy to use $20.8 billion to improve mental health. Increasing availability of crisis care and achieving full parity between physical and mental health care coverage. Invest in quality maternal health care for Black and Native women. Medicare should directly control drug prices so that they are affordable.

**Rep. Pallone (D-NJ), Chair of the Full Committee (**[**Opening Statement**](https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/Opening%20Statement_Pallone_HE_2022.4.27.pdf)**)**

Continue making healthcare more affordable and accessible, improve response to mental health challenges. Funding for services that address mental health and substance use. President Biden has improved access to affordable, high-quality healthcare. Health equity, funding for maternal health programs is of upmost importance.

**Rep. McMorris-Rodgers (R-WA), Ranking Member of the Full Committee**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services priorities is a political agenda instead of following their mission to improve the wellbeing of Americans. Concerned about lack of transparency and eroding confidence in the agency writ large. The administration’s decision making is based on power and politics. Overdose crisis kills more than 100,000 people a year. Ask for the administration’s plan to unwind public health emergency.

**HHS Secretary Becerra Opening Remarks (**[**Full Testimony**](https://energycommerce.house.gov/sites/democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/files/documents/Witness%20Testimony_Becerra_HE_2022.04.27.pdf)**)**

More than 257 million Americans have one vaccine. More Americans have insurance for healthcare, more than ever before in history. Support to Ukraine refugees. 988 suicide prevention lifeline is going to be essential. Extend Medicaid coverage for postpartum care from 2 months to 12 months. Goal of the budget is to get Americans relief and results. We have to tackle the drug overdose problem. True problem with mental health with younger Americans. Like to continue to build programs that focus resources and attention into schools. Invested 40 million to provide health services to children, integrate behavioral health support in community settings like community centers and schools.

**Q&A:**

**Question**: When the public health emergency ends, Medicaid and CHIP eligibility should continue for 12 months and include, postpartum eligibility for new moms, and CHIP express lane eligibility. Do you agree?

**Secretary Becerra**:

It is clear that providing this coverage has been beneficial and kept many Americans from poverty.

**Rep. Castor (D-FL):** What is the vision for 988?

**Secretary Becerra:** We have dispensed $300 million to ensure that we are ready for 988. We have to make sure these services follow through. Locally operated system with federal support. Doing everything to have the workforce in place.

**Rep. Schrader (D-OR):**

How are increases within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) proposed in the president’s budget going to help address the mental health needs of our kids?

**Secretary Becerra:**

Concentrate resources to help children through schools and community settings. We should be able to go into communities and help the youth of America.

**Rep. Ruiz (D-CA)**

A shortage of healthcare providers is one of the biggest challenges to healthcare access. We will have a shortage of 124,000 physicians by 2034. This is most pronounced in underserved communities. Advocate of teaching health center program. Physicians who train in community health centers are more likely to practice in underserved access and expand diversity in the workforce. One of the biggest challenges is uncertainty of funding. We need to support this program.

**Rep. Kelly (D-IL)**

Black mothers are 3 to 4 times more likely to die from a pregnancy related death than white women. I was very proud that the American Rescue Plan included a policy that gave states the option to cover new mothers on Medicaid for 12 months. We need to pass a mandatory and permanent Medicaid post-partum extension policy.

**Secretary Becerra**:

5 states have taken up this option and 11 more states are thinking about this option. It is beneficial to continue giving full Medicaid coverage to new mothers after 60 days, because the child and the parent continue to need those health services.

**Rep. Barragan (D-CA)**

The CHIP program has reduced uninsured children by 68%. Ensured that children and pregnant women had free access to Covid-19 testing and treatment. CHIP is the only federal insurance program that is not permanently funded.

**Rep. Blunt Rochester (D-DE)**

I’m glad that the budget requests include funding for grants that would help states enforce mental health parity requirements. Loopholes in the current law allow state and local plans to opt out of mental health parity for frontline workers.