

**Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden**  
**Subcommittee on Health**  
**“Implementing the 21st Century Cures Act: An Update from the Office of the**  
**National Coordinator”**  
**December 11, 2018**

With this hearing, this subcommittee will cap off a complete review of the major provisions contained within the bipartisan 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act of 2016. So far, we have heard from the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Today, we will hear from the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.

In so many parts of our lives technology has allowed us to move data seamlessly and better connect to ease burdens. However, with the transition in the health sector to electronic medical records we have not seen the same results. We hear of limitations in technology functionality, provider burden in documentation, a lack of a robust market to tackle add on technologies, and the lack of the ability to easily share information.

The fundamental value proposition of Electronic Health Record systems is the continuity of evidence-based care, however, patient health data continue to be fragmented and difficult to access for health care providers and patients themselves.

The functionality of EHR systems lags behind the technological capabilities presently available, and until we close that gap I do not see how we can truly recognize the potential of clinical registries, payment reform, or health information exchanges.

For these reasons, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures legislation realized that bedside coordinated care is going to matter the most in delivering new technologies and therapies to patients. Today, we will get an update on the law’s implementation.

I know ONC has been able to implement some parts of the law, such as the new interoperability committee and the recent draft report on physician burden.

However, some of the pillars of the law remain unimplemented because the needed regulations have not been released. While this update is important despite the lack of regulations, I sincerely hope to see tangible progress soon because every day we wait is another day patients and providers are not able to benefit from some of the most important provisions of the law.

It is my hope that Dr. Rucker you can walk the committee through what you believe the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Interoperability title can accomplish and how we can unleash the technology revolution that we have enjoyed in so many other sectors of our economy into the healthcare space. There is so much innovation waiting to be unleashed and so many ideas that will lower costs and increase quality. We just need to knock down the artificial walls that stubbornly prevent us from seeing the return on innovation that I think we all know awaits us.

I look forward to your testimony.