

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

June 8, 2021

Chairman Richard Neal
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building

Dear Chairman Neal,

Thank you for convening this hearing with Secretary Becerra on the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) FY 2022 budget request.

As you well know, good paying jobs and growing paychecks do more for working families than new Washington mandates and permanently smaller paychecks.

President Biden's budget endangers American families with a one-size-fits-all approach that puts Washington in charge of Americans' personal health and child care decisions. We urge you to reject this budget and instead work with Republicans on policies to restore our nation's economic growth.

This budget means fewer cures, ignores Medicare's looming insolvency or destabilizes it entirely, and strips away greater flexibility and access to health care for rural and underserved communities. Its prescription drug price fixing agenda will lead to fewer cures with as many as 100 fewer drugs entering the United States market over the next decade, or about one-third of the total number of drugs expected to enter the market during that time.

Moreover, Americans continue to struggle with unaffordable coverage, yet President Biden's budget calls for massive new permanent subsidies costing \$163 billion over the next decade that do nothing to actually lower health care costs. Medicare is five short years from going effectively broke – yet the Biden budget refuses to advance meaningful reforms to save and strengthen the program.

Without changes, working Americans could face a hike in Medicare payroll taxes by 26 percent or seniors could see their benefits cut by 16 percent to make the program solvent. And finally, despite Americans' greater use of telehealth during the COVID-19 crisis—


the national weekly average of telehealth users jumped from 13,000 to 1.7 million in 2020— President Biden will not guarantee a continuation of these critical benefits for Medicare patients beyond the end of the Public Health Emergency.

When it comes to our working families, under the President’s “Crush American Families Plan,” Washington takes more of Americans’ incomes and redistributes the money in the form of benefits that politicians—not families—control. The budget doubles down on permanently putting Washington, not parents, in charge of child care and children’s education at a cost of nearly \$500 billion over the next decade—paid for on the backs of working families, whether they use it or not.

Finally, we are concerned about the strain that President Biden’s border crisis is placing on the vulnerable children and families in the American foster care system. Unaccompanied minors have been streaming across the border for months now. State child welfare agencies are competing with HHS for placements. There is a real crisis at our southern border, and I am concerned that it is not getting enough attention from this Administration. Republican members of this Committee have sent multiple [letters](#) to HHS with no response.

Ways and Means Republicans will raise these concerns and more today during our hearing with HHS Secretary Becerra, and we hope you will allow this Committee instead to focus on policies that advance economic prosperity rather than a partisan budget proposal that will hold back our recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "KEVIN BRADY". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "K" and "B".

KEVIN BRADY
Republican Leader
Committee on Ways and Means