



Chairman Rick Scott's Opening Remarks February 11, 2026 Hearing

"The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging will now come to order.

Across the country, older Americans are feeling that it is harder than ever to get timely access to the doctors and care they need to live happy, healthy lives.

And even when seniors do find a doctor, many feel rushed and disconnected from them.

Doctors aren't the villains here. Like their patients, they are victims of a broken system.

Doctors WANT to care for and connect with their patients, but our rigid, top-down health care system is making that job nearly impossible.

This is especially true for doctors who see patients on Medicare or other government-run or subsidized health care programs.

Federal mandates and administrative requirements pile on paperwork and force doctors to spend more time on compliance than on care, making patients face one obstacle after another just to get help.

The result? Patients can't get the care they need from doctors, and doctors can't give patients the care they deserve.

Absolutely no one benefits from this.

We are forcing our doctors to operate in a system that prioritizes paperwork over patients and federal mandates over professional judgment.

The demands on doctors to focus on compliance over care are higher than they've ever been.

Doctors must navigate unstable insurance and Medicare policies, different reporting standards, and excessive administrative burdens, just to take care of their patients!

No one benefits in this situation – not patients, and certainly not doctors, who got into this profession because they want to HELP patients.

And the result is less care, less access, and worse outcomes.

This is especially true in rural and underserved areas that already struggle to find and maintain health care providers, and the regulatory burden is especially tough for those who treat older Americans.

It's no wonder that doctors regularly report feeling higher levels of burnout than other U.S. workers!

That burnout leads to more doctors quitting their jobs...which creates more doctor shortages...which leads to increased administrative burden...which creates more disconnection and fewer rewarding interactions with patients...which results in MORE burnout...

In the most serious cases, this burnout contributes to devastating mental health consequences for physicians and their families, including serious depression and even suicide.

We owe it to all of our constituents, but especially our aging population – and those responsible for caring for them – to stop this cycle.

Today, we will look at how Washington's regulations and red tape play into this crisis, and what we can do to fix it so that our doctors can spend more time caring for patients and less time navigating bureaucracy.

We'll hear from witnesses who interact with physicians at all levels: They train our doctors, they manage them in medical practices, they treat them, and they work with them as colleagues and are doctors themselves.

They will tell us about their real-life experiences navigating and preparing doctors to deal with Washington's top-down, one-size-fits-all approach to regulating medicine.

They will also share their experience working to solve these problems – what steps we can take to help our doctors and the patients they serve put the doctor-patient relationship back at the center of health care.

I look forward to a productive discussion today with our witnesses."

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