

## **Crapo Statement at Hearing on the Rising Cost of Health Care**

*November 19, 2025*

**Washington, D.C.**—U.S. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) delivered the following remarks at a hearing on the rising cost of health care.

*As prepared for delivery:*

“After the longest shutdown in history, the federal government has reopened.

“For 43 days, Americans lived with disruption and uncertainty. Essential food assistance was paused, paychecks for servicemembers and federal workers were withheld, and air travel was delayed for safety.

“Both sides agree the cost of health care is too high. But sending billions of dollars to insurance companies while premiums continue to rise and the deficit continues to grow is not a solution.

“We need to address the root causes of the explosive increase in health care costs, rather than mask them with unsustainable spending.

“For 43 days, Republicans made the same offer—reopen the government and we will negotiate. Today, we meet to discuss potential solutions. To our witnesses, thank you for your willingness to appear on such short notice to share your insights.

“Our health care system is broken. Obamacare failed to make health care more affordable. Premiums and out-of-pocket costs are rising for all Americans.

“In the individual market, the Obamacare subsidies—which do not expire, despite some confusing rhetoric—only mask year-over-year price increases. The temporary, enhanced COVID-era credits, which Democrats twice set to expire, exacerbate structural failures. Fraud has exploded and incentives to hold down premiums have evaporated.

“In fact, only three to four percentage points of the underlying premium increase confronting patients is the result of the expiration of the enhanced COVID credits.

“Some will argue that time has run out to consider alternatives to extending the COVID credits. I encourage my colleagues to avoid this conclusion and instead keep an open mind in search of a bipartisan outcome.

“We need both short-term and long-term, sustainable solutions.

“In the short term, we cannot simply throw good money after bad policy. If we keep advancing a system that drives up premiums, we will make this problem even harder to solve.

“Instead, we should set the groundwork for giving Americans more control over their health care choices. Rather than accepting the current system of giving billions of taxpayer dollars to insurers, we should consider providing financial assistance directly to consumers through health savings accounts (HSAs), which are now available on the Obamacare exchanges because of a provision in the One Big Beautiful Bill.

“Leveraging long-standing provisions in the tax code, like the medical expense deduction, could help patients further defray high out-of-pocket prices.

“To guide future policymaking, a commission at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) could evaluate and recommend options to further reduce costs for all Americans.

“We should fund cost-sharing reduction subsidies, which mitigate out-of-pocket costs for low-income enrollees, reduce premiums for all Obamacare plans by over 10 percent and save taxpayers’ money.

“We should also enact pharmaceutical benefit manager (PBM) reform, which would realign incentives in the drug supply chain to lower patient costs at the pharmacy counter. Ranking Member Wyden and I intend to reintroduce the Senate Finance Committee’s package shortly and we invite all members of this Committee to join us as co-sponsors as we move the bill to the President’s desk for his signature.

“The PBM process undertaken by this Committee should serve as a model for other reforms. Health care integration can produce efficiencies, but too much consolidation can result in monopolistic powerhouses that block innovative disruptors, limit market competition and constrain consumer choice.

“We must also seek to expand care access points to avoid costly treatment delays. Establishing long-term telehealth flexibility would allow patients to receive care in lower-cost settings. We should reform our clinician payment system to bolster the workforce, increase reimbursement stability for independent practitioners and allow a wider variety of providers to deliver services.

“Swift coverage of cutting-edge innovations and an emphasis on preventive measures can reduce higher long-term costs.

“We cannot transform our broken health care system overnight, but this Committee has a proven record of bipartisan success. Today’s hearing is the first step in building the foundation for reform.

“Thank you, again, to our witnesses. I now recognize Ranking Member Wyden for his opening remarks.”