

Crapo Statement at Hearing on Mental Health Care in America
June 15, 2021

Washington, D.C.--U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, delivered the following remarks at a hearing entitled, "Mental Health Care in America: Addressing Root Causes and Identifying Policy Solutions."

The text of Ranking Member Crapo's remarks, as prepared, is below.

"Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ensuring access to high-quality mental health services has been—and must continue to be—a priority.

"Far too often, individuals with mental health, addiction or substance use disorders find themselves isolated from their communities and separated from their providers.

"While Congress has taken decisive steps to address addiction, bolster behavioral health care and curb substance use disorders, challenges remain.

"This Committee has the ability to turn the tide.

"We can begin by empowering states to craft innovative, targeted solutions.

"Medicaid functions most effectively when states have the flexibilities they need to address patients' unique care needs and adapt to unforeseen crises.

"As the nation's largest payer of mental health and substance use disorder services, Medicaid must support, rather than subvert, state efforts to serve communities in need.

"Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted—and exacerbated—the mental and behavioral health challenges we continue to confront.

"Loss of loved ones, increased isolation and delayed treatment prompted a spike in anxiety, depression and other debilitating conditions.

"While many are returning to their pre-pandemic lives, we should not be content to allow our mental health care delivery system to revert to its pre-pandemic ways.

"Whether for rural communities, urban areas or tribes, telehealth has undoubtedly increased access to care.

“Through emergency flexibilities and permanent legislation authored by this Committee late last year, we have taken crucial first steps toward modernizing telehealth coverage.

“I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and with other members of this Committee to build on those efforts in the months ahead.

“Further, by partnering with state and local leaders, we can spur care coordination, strengthen the mental health workforce and drive value through delivery system reforms.

“While there is no silver bullet here, I am confident we can tackle all of these challenges while upholding core principles of fiscal responsibility and program integrity.

“Before concluding, it bears emphasizing that we must continue to make progress in improving understanding of mental health so that people in need are not afraid or ashamed to seek treatment.

“We cannot discount the impact of stigma on preventing those in need of treatment from receiving care.

“I look forward to hearing our witness testimony today to learn more about the solutions they have identified.”