

Americans" that examined the process we have in place today for drug and device development.

We have received over 80 comments already, and have shared those with the staff of all members on the committee.

Our committee also has a bipartisan staff working group that has been meeting for around a month now, learning more about the key agencies involved in biomedical research and development.

We have with us today Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health, which funds and enables much of the early stage research that leads to medical breakthroughs. And Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, which regulates all the medical products we come in contact with.

Dr. Collins wrote in 2013 that: "Drugs exist for only about 250 of the more than 4,400 conditions with defined molecular causes. And it takes far too long and far too much money to get a new drug into our medicine cabinets. This is an old problem that cries out for new and creative solutions."

Since Dr. Collins wrote that, the number of conditions with defined molecular causes has increased to more than 5,400, yet the number of new drugs approved has not kept pace with these discoveries.

Dr. Hamburg has said that "we are left relying on the 20th century approaches for the review, approval and oversight of the treatments and cures of the 21st century."

So today's hearing is a perfect place for us to start—with the heads of these two critical agencies, both of whom have sounded the alarm on our existing process for drug and device development.

This work will affect every single American—from a very ill patient who has run out of treatment options and is counting on the most cutting-edge drug, to an active child with asthma who's hoping to run faster and farther with the aid of a new drug.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses more about their thoughts on these five issues that Senator Burr and I identified in our report: First, it costs too much to bring medical products through the pipeline to patients. Second, as science and technology advance, the discovery and development process takes too long for medical products to make their way to patients. Third, FDA's responsibilities have grown to include many activities unrelated to the core function of regulating medical products to advance the public health. Fourth, the disparity in scientific knowledge at FDA and the fast pace of biomedical innovation are slowing, and in some cases, stifling innovation in American medicine. Fifth, a working FDA is essential to continuing biomedical innovation in the United States and maintaining America's global leadership in medical innovation.

In the words of Andrew Eschenbach, the former Commissioner of the FDA and Director of the National Cancer Institute: "We stand on the cusp of a revolution in health care. Advances in molecular medicine will allow us to develop powerful new treatments that can cure or even prevent diseases like Alzheimer's and cancer. Tomorrow's high-tech cures can also slash health-care costs and eliminate ineffective treatments."

I look forward to taking the first step toward addressing these important issues. If we do it right, our work here will help improve the lives of every single American.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

- Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, this week marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of legislation to create the Appalachian Regional Commission, ARC.

In the decade of the 1960s, intense poverty and economic struggle characterized the existence for many people and towns running down the spine of the Appalachian Mountains. At the time, more than 19 million Americans were living in the Appalachian region and struggling to achieve the American dream.

The magnitude and vastness of the challenges in Appalachia, which spread across many States, led the region's Governors in 1960 to form the Conference of Appalachian Governors to develop a regional approach for resolving these complex issues.

In 1961, they took their case to newly elected President John F. Kennedy, who had been deeply moved by the poverty he saw during campaign trips to West Virginia. Their efforts led to the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission and a broad bipartisan coalition in Congress passed the Appalachian Regional Development Act, ARDA, early in 1965. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it into law on March 9, 1965. It is a unique agency to this day, made up of one Federal co-chair and 13 Governors who serve as State co-chairs. It also receives local input on allocation of resources from the local development districts.

Over the last 50 years, it has been able to inject Federal funds and leverage State and private resources to address the deep needs of this region. Much success has been achieved, but yet much remains to be done.

Poverty has been cut in half in Appalachia from nearly 31 percent of the region's people in 1960 to about 16 percent today.

In 1960, only 32 percent of the Appalachian population completed high school and 5 percent had a college degree. Since then, the number of college graduates had increased four-fold to 21 percent.

One of the most critical challenges facing the Appalachian region in 1964 was its relative isolation. With the aid of the Appalachian Regional Commission, nearly 2,700 miles of highway development routes have been built.

Since 1965, ARC has financed nearly 25,000 separate strategic investments in non-highway activities in the region, which includes \$3.8 billion in Federal funds. The positive result has been that nearly three times that amount, \$9 billion has been forthcoming in matching funds from other Federal, State and local funding sources. Better yet, ARC-financed investments in Appalachia have also leveraged nearly \$16 billion in added private investment.

I want to congratulate the Appalachian Regional Commission on its

50th Anniversary. I look forward to working with and supporting the future efforts of ARC and the local development districts as they continue to work with the States, localities and the private sector to build the economy of the Appalachian region.●

##### CELEBRATING KEMP MILL SYNAGOGUE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY AND THE SERVICE OF RABBI YAAKOV "JACK" BIELER

- Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, this Saturday, I will have the privilege and pleasure of visiting Kemp Mill Synagogue, KMS, for a Melava Malka on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. KMS held its first service on March 17, 1990, attended by a group of 50 worshipers in a Kemp Mill home, and held its first services in its current location on Kemp Mill Road on Shabbat of September 19, 1998. The Modern Orthodox Synagogue is a vibrant and loving community where members of the congregation gather to daven, learn, celebrate, and observe lifecycle events, smachot, and rituals together.

In 1994, Rabbi Yaakov (Jack) Bieler officially became the first rabbi of KMS. As the leader of the KMS community, Rabbi Bieler has led and inspired the development of an ambitious program of shiurim, study groups, scholars-in-residence and educational programs. Weekly Divrei Tora by men and women enlighten the congregation by offering a diversity of perspectives. Youth groups and social activities contribute to creating a warm and engaged community.

Rabbi Bieler is a great friend and true leader in Maryland's faith-based community. While he has been at KMS for over 20 years, his commitment to his faith and community has been a lifelong passion. Rabbi Bieler was raised in Bayside, Queens, and attended local public schools. In 1969, he graduated from the James Striar School of Jewish Studies in New York, where he honed his mastery of Jewish texts. He spent the years of 1969 to 1971 studying at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh in Israel.

When Rabbi Bieler returned to New York, he studied at Yeshiva University, where he was ordained by the Rabbi Isaac Eichanan Theological Seminary. This prestigious program, which dates back to 1886, challenges and trains leaders of Judaism to hold fast to the ways of the Torah while responding to the questions and demands of modern society. During this time, he also pursued a master of arts in Jewish Education from the Ferkauf Graduate School of Education, completing his studies in 1974.

While Rabbi Bieler's studies prepared him to be a Jewish religious leader, he always sought new ways to share his knowledge with others. To this end, Rabbi Bieler has spent much of his life in the classroom. He served on the faculty and was a chairman of the Talmud Department of the Joseph H. Lookstein Upper School of Ramaz from 1974 to

1988. In these roles, he helped to educate children in Judaic and general studies, holding himself and others to high standards in the classroom and in the community. And he has always been committed to menschlichkeit, or the values of human dignity and mutual respect, and the strength of Jewish heritage. Today, he is still guided by these commitments.

Rabbi Bieler served concurrently on the faculty of the Adult Education Institute of the Lincoln Square Synagogue between 1971 and 1977 and as a permanent scholar-in-residence of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun from 1977 to 1988. This service speaks to Rabbi Bieler's belief that our education—in faith and in life—never ends; we are always learning, always seeking to become better versions of ourselves. His role as an educator grew and changed before he found his way to Kemp Mill Synagogue. In 1988, he assumed the position of lead teacher and chairman of the Judaic Studies Department at the Hebrew Academy of Greater Washington, now the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy, a Modern Orthodox Jewish day school in Rockville, MD. He worked at the Hebrew Academy of Washington for a number of years and in a variety of roles, becoming the Upper School assistant principal in charge of Judaic Studies in 1991. During his tenure, Rabbi Bieler strove to provide students with a firm foundation in Torah and Jewish law, to encourage creativity and critical thinking, and promoted a deep sense of community and personal responsibility in students.

Rabbi Bieler is a man who is much loved and respected by his community. And he is a humble man, so it falls to others to recite his many achievements. During his tenure at Ramaz, he was awarded the Gruss Outstanding Educator award. In 1985, he received a prestigious Jerusalem Fellows fellowship and spent the year with family, including his beloved wife Dr. Joanie Bieler, in Jerusalem. Among other achievements, Rabbi Bieler has published numerous articles on Jewish education and issues facing Judaism today, especially concerning Modern Orthodoxy.

Rabbi Bieler will be retiring from his service as the leader of the Kemp Mill Synagogue community on June 30, 2015. He has faithfully served KMS for most of its 25-year history, leading and inspiring the development of an ambitious educational program indicative of his love for teaching, learning, and sharing Judaism. Under his leadership, KMS has encouraged a congregation of mutual enlightenment and diversified perspectives. Furthermore, youth groups and social activities have been cultivated and grown, creating a warm and engaged community. KMS is an important hub of community and faith in Silver Spring. KMS members are leaders in the Jewish Federation, local day schools, the Rabbinical Council, the Emunah Society, the Kemp Mill

Civic Association, the Orthodox Union, and the larger community. They are committed to worship and to service, to the United States, and to the State of Israel.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating KMS on its 25th anniversary and acknowledging the inspired service, dedication, and leadership of Rabbi Yaakov and Dr. Joanie Bieler who will undoubtedly continue to be involved in their community and inspire others to serve even when their formal leadership roles at KMS come to an end. I wish them all the best.●

#### REMEMBERING PAUL CHRISTENSEN

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, we honor the life and service of Paul Christensen, whose passing signifies a great loss for Nevada. I send my condolences and prayers to his wife Norma and the entire family in this time of mourning. Mr. Christensen was a man committed to his country, his State, and his community. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. Christensen moved with his father and mother to Las Vegas in 1939 when his father started the family's jewelry business. He graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1950 and continued his studies at Brigham Young University, where he earned his bachelor's degree. He then enlisted in the U.S. Air Force as a pilot, serving in the Korean war. As one of our Nation's servicemembers, he made exceptional sacrifices for our country. I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Christensen for his courageous contributions to the United States of America. His service to his country and his bravery earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation and will never be forgotten.

After serving in the U.S. Air Force, Mr. Christensen returned to Las Vegas in 1957 and worked in the family jewelry store. It was during this time that he married Mrs. Christensen and began his lifelong legacy of commitment to his local community. He served in the Nevada Assembly in the 1950s and then the Nevada Senate in the 1960s. In 1977 and 1981, Christensen was elected to the Las Vegas City Council, during which time he focused on the safety of southern Nevada communities by improving police presence and increasing the number of firefighters. He also worked to improve road conditions, specifically widening Jones Boulevard.

Mr. Christensen then continued his service to the great State of Nevada by working tirelessly on the Clark County Commission until 1996. During his decades spent working to better the Silver State, he was also chairman of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, president of the Las Vegas Valley Water District, and was appointed by Governor Kenny Guinn to serve on the Transportation Services Authority. In October of 2013, the Paul J. Christensen

Bridge was named after him in honor of his work in his local community, a distinction well deserved. Mr. Christensen continued philanthropic work for the Las Vegas community until his health declined.

Throughout his life, Mr. Christensen worked tirelessly to make southern Nevada the best it could be, which I am honored to commend. He was a role model and his legacy will live on. Today, I join the Las Vegas community and citizens of the Silver State to celebrate the life of an upstanding Nevadan, Paul Christensen.●

#### RECOGNIZING GOODWILL OF SOUTHERN NEVADA

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Goodwill of Southern Nevada for its commitment and dedication to providing our veterans, military servicemembers, and their families with supportive services to aid in securing a job and financial solidarity. The Veterans Integration Program, VIP, is a unique service that assists our Nation's bravest as they return from the battlefield and readjust to life in their communities.

These heroes who served the United States and fought to protect our freedom frequently arrive home to a struggling economy. All too often, returning veterans and their families are unable to find a job and struggle with financial uncertainty. Goodwill of Southern Nevada is a positive light in the local Las Vegas community, working to change this reality. As of the end of January 2015, VIP has helped 507 local veterans in southern Nevada and their immediate families find work. The program offers help in job training and job placement and provides necessary tools to fluidly transition from the military back into the local community successfully. Although there is no way to ever adequately thank our military men and women, Goodwill of Southern Nevada stands as a shining example of an organization that has gone above and beyond to positively impact the lives of our heroes who so bravely fought for our freedom.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals but also to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans service organizations like Goodwill of Southern Nevada are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing Goodwill of Southern Nevada, an organization with a mission that is both noble and charitable. I am humbled and honored to recognize the Goodwill of