

The **UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**COMMITTEE** *on* **FINANCE**  
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**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Business Meeting on the Nominations of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to CMS and Andrea Palm to HHS**  
*As Prepared for Delivery*

The Finance Committee is meeting today to consider two highly qualified nominees to key health care positions in the Biden administration.

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure is President Biden's nominee to serve as administrator for the Centers on Medicare & Medicaid Services. She knows America's federal health programs inside and out. She's worked on expanding access and bringing down costs in Medicare and Medicaid. She helped write the Affordable Care Act while on staff at the Ways and Means Committee, and she worked on the ACA's implementation at HHS during the Obama administration. She's also worked at the Office of Management and Budget and in the private sector.

Andrea Palm is President Biden's nominee to serve as Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services. She knows exactly what it takes to run this department that's so essential to the well-being of all Americans. She previously served as the department's chief of staff and senior counselor to the secretary during the Obama administration.

More recently, she's led the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, working to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, expand insurance coverage, improve mental health care and reduce hunger in Wisconsin.

These are highly qualified and experienced nominees. They're coming off an excellent hearing in this committee last week. Health care is always a topic of serious debate, but these nominees made clear to the committee that they want to work with both sides to find common ground and solve big health care challenges.

I'm looking forward to working with them on a host of issues. The pandemic is still raging and the vaccine effort is still ramping up. There's a lot of work to be done with respect to the transformation of Medicare. It used to be an acute care program. Today it's a chronic care program focused on cancer, diabetes, heart disease and more. The previous administration slow-walked the implementation of this committee's CHRONIC Care Act. I want to work with these nominees to turn that around.

There's a lot of work to be done on mental health care, because it has gotten short shrift for too long in America. The same goes for bringing down prescription drug costs and addressing racial disparities and improving maternal health care in this country.

There's a lot of work ahead. Fortunately the president has chosen a top-flight team to run HHS and our federal health programs. I'm going to support both these nominees fully, and I urge my colleagues to support them when the committee votes shortly.

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