



**Opening Statement of Chairman Chris Collins
Subcommittee on Health and Technology
Hearing: "Telemedicine: A Prescription for Small Medical Practices?"
July 31, 2014**

Good morning. The hearing will come to order. I want to welcome all of our witnesses and thank them for being here.

Small businesses are innovators – particularly in health care. Small companies are transforming medical care with new products, services and cutting edge technology. And small medical practices are changing, too, to connect with and serve a more mobile population.

Telemedicine refers to patient medical care where the provider and patient are separated by distance. Although the adoption of telemedicine has been slow, it is increasing, and recently several medical organizations adopted model policies for its appropriate use.

This technology offers the promise of connecting small physician practices with patients, other medical providers, hospitals, and areas that are medically underserved. Today, some small practices are finding it difficult to stay afloat due to the burdens of complying with the health care law and the cost of operating a small practice. Telemedicine may provide opportunities for these practices to broaden their reach and offer more accessible care to more patients, serve a larger geographic area, or consult with distant medical colleagues. Some have suggested that small practices can be the “hub” that connects a patient’s health care team. But small practices can encounter numerous barriers to telemedicine.

The cost of technology, broadband availability, licensing requirements, and reimbursement rules from private insurers as well as Medicare and Medicaid may limit or delay the adoption of telemedicine.

Today, the Subcommittee will examine a topic that touches both health and technology: the use of telemedicine and its possibilities for small medical practices. We look forward to hearing from our distinguished panel of witnesses about this exciting convergence of medicine and technology.

Now I yield to Ranking Member Hahn for her opening remarks.