

Dr. Martin Makary
Opening Statement
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
March 6, 2025

Thank you and good morning, Chairman [Dr.] Cassidy, Ranking Member Sanders, and members of the committee.

I'm humbled to be here before you. I'd like to thank President Trump for his confidence in nominating me to lead the Food and Drug Administration. I am joined today by my wife, brother, and sister as well as my sacrificial mother and my career role model, my father. He dedicated his life to the care of children with leukemia, lymphoma, hemophilia, sickle cell disease, then turned his focus to adult hematology.

His father was a pharmacist in a poor Egyptian community, and believed in treating everyone in the community equally, especially the most vulnerable among them—a motto I've tried to live by in my career.

Even from the African continent, my grandfather looked to the FDA for trusted guidance. That's because the FDA has a long history using gold standard science to uphold public safety and help us take care of people when they come to us for help.

As a kid, I vividly remember being in a grocery store with my dad, when someone stopped to give him a hug after a long battle with lymphoma. It happened a few times, and each time it inspired me even more.

For 22 years now I've been privileged to walk into the Johns Hopkins Hospital to live out that mission, and each morning as I enter the front door, I pause to look at the 9-foot statue of Jesus that stands in the hospital lobby and read the sacred text engraved at the base, "Come to me all who are heavily laden, and I will give you rest."

I'm grateful to Johns Hopkins for allowing me to have a dual career as both a surgical oncologist, and a health care researcher.

In addition to using FDA approved devices and medications, my research has focused on patient safety, the Orphan Drug Act, how the FDA evaluates devices, opioids, and how health care has become too fragmented, too cold, and too corporate. My research on price gouging and predatory billing turned into advocacy to call for price transparency in health care.

President Trump heard the plea and invited me to the White House to enact the nation's first executive order to bring down hospital and drug prices through greater transparency.

The reform was entirely bipartisan—just as President Trump and Secretary Kennedy's call to Make America Health Again by finally addressing the root causes of our childhood chronic disease epidemic resonated with Republican, Democrat, and Independent moms across this country.

A smarter FDA that works for all Americans should be a goal we can all agree on. As a scientist who has spent a career evaluating medical interventions, I believe in the scientific process, but in addition to using trusted science, we can also use common sense. Dr. Cassidy is a highly respected hepatologist and can tell you: It's hard to perform a sophisticated long operation for liver cancer and not ask, "why have rates of liver cancer tripled in the U.S.?"

We now have a generational opportunity in American health care. President Trump and Secretary Kennedy's focus on healthy foods has galvanized a grassroots movement in America. Childhood obesity is not a willpower problem, and the rise of early-onset Alzheimer's is not genetic—we should be, and we will be, assessing the foods impacting our health.

Thanks to the courage of President Trump and Secretary Kennedy, we now have a generational opportunity to usher in radical transparency and to facilitate more cures, meaningful treatments, and diagnostics to empower people to take care of their health.

My father told me to write down my observations about my experiences in health care and the research I delved into. Much of the research I did research focused on the fundamental question: Is what we are doing working? I wrote books to educate people on medical science to empower them to live a healthy life. If confirmed, I hope to ensure the FDA holds to the gold standard of trusted science, transparency, and common sense to rebuild public trust and Make America Healthy Again.