

# Dr. Burgess Weekly Video Address April 5, 2013

## “Health Care Price Transparency”

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Hello this is your Congressman Michael Burgess. When I had my medical practice in Lewisville, and I'd recommend a treatment option to a patient, the first question was not “is this the best course of treatment.” Instead, the first question was usually, “will my insurance cover this.” If the answer was yes, the conversation didn't go much further.

We all agree we have a health care system that is in need of reform, and most Americans find costs too high. One of the biggest problems that there is – there's not a clear picture about the costs, and the factors that drive the cost of care.

It does seem prudent to first understand the problem fully, and determine the role of the various factors play when assessing cost. To take the first step toward true price transparency in the health care market, fellow Texas Congressman Gene Green and I have introduced the Health Care Price Transparency Act.

This is bipartisan legislation, and it's a long-term solution to runaway medical costs. First, it builds upon state laws to establish and maintain conditions requiring disclosure of information on hospital charges. It would make such information available to the public. And finally, it would provide individuals with information about estimated out-of-pocket costs for health services.

This means that health insurance providers would be, required by law, to give patients an actual dollar estimate of the cost of the health care, and the services within a specified period of time.

Additionally, the bill calls for research in three areas. It would review the types of cost information that individuals find useful in making decisions regarding health care. Secondly, it would look at how this useful information varies according to an individual's health insurance coverage, and if so, by what type of coverage they have. And finally, it would look at the ways that this information is distributed in a timely and simple manner. These are simple, but important provisions.

The health insurance system has shielded people from the actual cost of care that they receive. Once we understand the actual cost, then we can begin to make effective changes leading to fair physician reimbursement, appropriate patient billing, and better medical services.

Thank you for taking the time to listen. For more information on legislative issues before the United States Congress, please visit my website, [burgess.house.gov](http://burgess.house.gov). May God bless you and your family - and as always, may God bless Texas.