Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
May 21, 2025

As submitted to the record:

I would like to welcome Ranking Member Blumenthal and all the members, new and old, to this, the first hearing of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in the 119th Congress. I look forward to working with all of you as we conduct oversight and investigations to uncover and expose the truth on issues that are important to the American people.

My hope is that our work will be largely non-partisan—there should be nothing partisan about revealing the truth. That was this Subcommittee's experience in the last Congress, as we conducted bipartisan investigations into the assassination attempts on President Trump and the Coast Guard's cover-up of sexual abuse, and attempted to obtain information the government withheld from the 9/11 families.

In addition to the Subcommittee's bipartisan record, its reputation for conducting thorough investigations spans decades. Since the 1940s, this Subcommittee has been the epicenter of major Congressional oversight efforts. I hope to use this Subcommittee to build on that legacy by bringing much-needed transparency to the public, revealing the truth, and exposing wrongdoing. But it won't be easy. Wrongdoers are very good at covering their tracks, and we are aware of allegations suggesting document destruction and purposeful evasion of FOIA.

The title of today's hearing is, "The Corruption of Science and Federal Health Agencies: How Health Officials Downplayed and Hid Myocarditis and Other Adverse Events Associated with the COVID-19 Vaccines."

As chairman of the full committee, I held multiple hearings in the first year of the pandemic that opened my eyes to the capture and corruption of federal health agencies and scientific research. So much of our miserably failed response to COVID made no sense. Masking, devastating shutdowns, the sabotage of early treatment, rapid approval of Remdesivir, and the maniacal reliance on the COVID-19 injections as the only way to end the pandemic.

As ranking member of this subcommittee, I was unable to interest the Subcommittee or full Committee Chairs in joining my oversight of our pandemic response. So instead of formal hearings, I held public events giving those injured by the COVID-19 injection a platform to appeal to federal health officials and the public for help. I also provided opportunities for eminently qualified doctors and medical researchers who disagreed with our pandemic response to offer second opinions. More often than not, those who spoke up were vilified, censored, and suffered various forms of retaliation.

Fortunately, the retaliation did not deter them and they continued to speak out. Even better, they were joined by others. Some of those individuals are testifying today or are in the audience. I want to personally thank them for their courage and persistence.

Today, I am releasing an interim report that is based in large part on documents that were obtained by individuals who filed Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests over the last several years. These documents, obtained by reporters and private citizens, contained heavy redactions applied by the Biden administration. Yet, despite those obstructive efforts, these individuals initially raised awareness of the Biden's administration's failure to immediately warn the public about myocarditis and other adverse events linked to the COVID-19 injections.

I want to credit the tenacious reporting of Brenda Baletti, Ed Berkovich, Brian Hooker, Amy Kelly, Zachary Stieber, and Naomi Wolf. I also want to thank the individuals associated with React19, the Informed Consent Action Network, the book The Pfizer Papers, as well as the reporters at Epoch Times, The Defender, Just the News, the Daily Clout, and many others who worked persistently to expose the truth.

Over the last four years, under the Biden administration, federal health officials withheld information from the public regarding the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the safety and development of the COVID-19 injections. During that period, I sent over 70 oversight letters to the Biden administration seeking information related to COVID-19 that were either completely ignored or inadequately addressed. Many of these letters requested documents and data on COVID-19 vaccine adverse events, vaccine safety surveillance analyses, and government communications about the injections' potential health risks. These crucial government records belong to the American people, but the Biden administration refused to release them.

Why? If the COVID-19 injections were as safe and effective as Biden health officials consistently touted, then what would they have to hide?

Why would the Biden administration need to suppress evidence demonstrating the safety of the COVID-19 injections?

Records that the Subcommittee has obtained to date offer a simple, yet troubling, answer to these questions: Biden administration officials knew in early 2021 that the mRNA COVID-19 injections could result in adverse health events and they downplayed the risks to avoid alarming the public and create vaccine hesitancy. As a result, they violated what should be the inviolable principle of informed consent.

In late January of this year, shortly after I was named chairman of the Subcommittee, I subpoenaed the Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") for COVID-19 vaccine safety data and records the Biden administration previously withheld. While HHS's production of responsive records is far from complete, the information produced to date contains evidence of the Biden administration's efforts to downplay and delay warning the public about the risks of cardiac-related adverse events, such as myocarditis, associated with the mRNA COVID-19 injections.

The interim report I am releasing in conjunction with today's hearing highlights records detailing HHS's awareness of and response to cases of myocarditis—a type of heart

inflammation—following COVID-19 injection. As previously mentioned, while portions of some of these documents have already been made public over the years with various redactions through FOIA requests, the public will finally have complete access to various presentations, communications, and data reports absent excessive redactions.

The records discussed in the interim report show, in part:

- **On February 28, 2021**, the Israeli Ministry of Health notified officials at the CDC of "large reports of myocarditis, particularly in young people, following the administration of the Pfizer vaccine."[1]

- **On April 12, 2021**, a Department of Defense ("DoD"), Defense Health Agency ("DHA") consultant presented to various federal health officials noting that the vaccine safety surveillance system called V-safe, lacked the ability to detect reports of myocarditis and cardiac-related adverse events.[2] Regarding V-safe's omission of inquiries related to cardiac-related symptoms, the DHA consultant questioned her colleagues: "If you do not ask, you will not see it, but does that mean it does not exist?"[3]

- **In mid-April 2021**, CDC officials discussed safety signals for "myocarditis with mRNA vaccines" based on DoD and Israeli data, but still did not take immediate steps to warn the public.[4] For context, by the end of April, 2021, just four months into the COVID injection rollout, VAERS was already reporting 2,926 deaths worldwide within 30 days of injection, with 46.1% of those deaths occurring on day 0, 1, or 2 following injection.[5] When I asked then-NIH Director Francis Collins about what VAERS was showing at that point in time, he acknowledged six deaths had been attributed to the Johnson & Johnson injection, but as to the other 2,920 deaths reported on VAERS he callously stated: "Senator, people die."

- **From May 17, 2021 – May 21, 2021**, CDC officials discussed whether to issue a formal health warning—called a Health Alert Network ("HAN") message—on myocarditis,

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[1] PSICOVID_0000009-14; FOIA production: https://childrenshealthdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/23-00056-for-2-24-2023-Close.pdf at 710-713.
[2] *See, e.g.*, PSICOVID_00008808, 4651; FOIA production: https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/23656227/cdc-emails-chat-messages-on-post-vaccination-myocarditis.pdf at 257-258.
[3] PSICOVID_00008808.
[4] FOIA production: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K6B25XjBdKmjW5yEIEpZ1cvnr6jp3RAY/view at 301-302.
[5] *See* VAERS database query: United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Public Health Service (PHS), US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), 1990-4/23/2021, CDC WONDER On-line Database, accessed April 23, 2021, http://wonder.cdc.gov/vaers.html. Query criteria—Vaccine Products: VOCID-19 Vaccine (COVID19); COVID-19-2 (COVID-192). Group By: Month Received. State/Territory: All locations. Event Category: All Events. Show Totals: True. Show Zero Values: False; VAERS database query: United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Public Health Service (PHS), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) 1990-4/23/2021, CDC WONDER On-line Database, accessed on April 23, 2021, http://wonder.cdc.gov/vaers.html. Query criteria—Vaccine Products: COVID-19 Vaccine (COVID19); COVID-19-2 (COVID-192). Group By: Month Received. State/Territory: All locations. Event Category: Death. Show Totals: True. Show Zero Values: False.

noting that health care professionals across the nation may not be aware of the risk because "providers aren't reporting these cases to VAERS [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System]."[6]

- **Following a May 24, 2021** vaccine safety meeting that included FDA and CDC officials, U.S. public health officials exchanged draft meeting notes which included the question: "Is VAERS signaling for myopericarditis now?"; and the answer: "For the age groups 16-17 years and 18-24 years, yes."[7]

- **On May 25, 2021**, one day following the meeting where FDA and CDC officials acknowledged a safety signal for myopericarditis, the Biden White House distributed talking points to top U.S. health officials, including then-National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, downplaying the risk of myocarditis.[8]

- **From May 25, 2021 – May 27, 2021**, a CDC official provided up-to-date information on the status of the HAN to Pfizer and Moderna representatives, indicating CDC's preference to keep the vaccine companies more informed about vaccine adverse events than the American people.[9]

- **On May 26, 2021**, two days after the meeting where FDA and CDC officials acknowledged a safety signal for myopericarditis, then-Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock emailed then-CDC Director Rochelle Walensky noting that the "FDA does not concur with the issuance of the myocarditis HAN as written[.]"[10]

    - Records show that on May 26, 2021, CDC and FDA decided to "nix the HAN" and instead opted to publish less formal "clinical considerations" about myocarditis on CDC's website.[11]

- **On May 27, 2021**, three days after the meeting where FDA and CDC officials acknowledged the safety signal for myopericarditis, FDA's then-Director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, Peter Marks, wrote to Walensky and Woodcock and appeared to raise concerns about even posting "clinical considerations" about myocarditis.[12] He wrote "I need to ask for your patience with me. We still have concerns here if myocarditis and pericarditis have not actually signaled."[13]

    - That same day, as CDC officials edited the statement for CDC's website, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, then then-Director of the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, discussed the need to "walk back" a sentence advising doctors to "consider

[6] PSICOVID_00004649-4650; FOIA production: https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/23656227/cdc-emails-chat-messages-on-post-vaccination-myocarditis.pdf at 257-258.
[7] PSICOVID_00009452.
[8] PSICOVID_00005295-5312.
[9] *See, e.g.*, PSICOVID_00004649-4650, 4808-4809.
[10] PSICOVID_00005565.
[11] PSICOVID_00005569.
[12] PSICOVID_00005568.
[13] *Id.*

restricting patients with myocarditis from rigorous activity like competitive sports for at least 3 months until cleared by a healthcare professional."[14]

- **On May 28, 2021**, four days following the apparent discussion confirming a safety signal for myopericarditis, CDC posted on its website "clinical considerations" about myocarditis rather than issuing a formal HAN. These "clinical considerations" omitted any mention that doctors should "consider restricting patients with myocarditis from rigorous activity like competitive sports for at least 3 months until cleared by a healthcare professional."[15]

Rather than provide the public and health care providers with immediate and transparent information regarding the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis following COVID-19 injection, the Biden administration waited until late June 2021 to announce changes to the labels for the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines based on the "suggested increased risks" of myocarditis and pericarditis.[16]

The safety signal for myopericarditis that CDC and FDA officials discussed at a May 24, 2021 vaccine safety meeting, should have been more than sufficient justification to formally warn the public about the health risk through the HAN which is CDC's "primary method of sharing cleared information about urgent public health incidents[.]"[17]

Instead, the following day, on May 25, 2021, the Biden White House distributed talking points to top U.S. health officials which stated that reports of myocarditis and pericarditis occurring after vaccination were "rare" and that "getting vaccinated gets us back to normal."[18]

Federal health officials' primary concern was not vaccine adverse events linked to myocarditis, but instead appears to have been vaccine hesitancy and mandating the injection for virtually every American.[19] It is not surprising then, that they weren't finding what they weren't looking for.

It is also not surprising why, for four years, the Biden administration kept the vast majority of this information hidden from the public and Congress. They did not want the public or Congress to ever know the complete extent of their awareness of and lack of response to mRNA COVID-19 vaccine adverse health events. Now, as a result of the Subcommittee's

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[14] PSICOVID_00005566.
[15] *Id.*; Clinical Considerations: Myocarditis and Pericarditis after Receipt of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Among Adolescents and Young Adults, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 28, 2021, archived: https://web.archive.org/web/20210528145419/https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/myocarditis.html.
[16] Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: June 25, 2021, Food and Drug Administration, Jun. 25, 2021, https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-june-25-2021; Jack Phillips, FDA Adds Warning About Heart Inflammation to COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines, Epoch Times, Jun. 27, 2021, https://www.theepochtimes.com/article/fda-adds-warning-about-heart-inflammation-to-covid-19-mrna-vaccines-3876245.
[17] Health Alert Network (HAN), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Last Reviewed: Mar. 12, 2025, https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/.
[18] PSICOVID_00005297, 5305.
[19] PSICOVID_00005305, 5309.

oversight efforts, the public can finally review unredacted documents that should have been released years ago.

Today's revelations, while necessary and important, will not fix the damage done by the Biden administration's failure to immediately and transparently warn the public about the health risks associated with the COVID-19 injections. Most of the witnesses at today's hearing will testify about their experience of actually treating patients with serious and life-changing COVID-19 vaccine adverse side effects. How many individuals would have benefited from knowing what the Biden administration knew in early 2021 about cardiac-related adverse events associated with the injections prior to vaccination?

The Biden administration's decision to downplay the COVID-19 injection health risks and delay warning the public about cardiac-related adverse events associated with the injections jeopardized the public's health.

As more documents that have been hidden, redacted, and withheld for years become available, the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations will provide transparency and let the American public see what is their right to see.

I thank the witnesses for their testimony.