

Wednesday, April 27, 2005

## HELP APPROVES S.655: CDC FOUNDATION BILL, S.898: PATIENT NAVIGATOR, TO EASE HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR UNINSURED

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today announced the passage of two bills, S.655, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Foundation bill and S.898, the “Patient Navigator, Outreach, and Chronic Disease Prevention Act.”

“Today the HELP Committee is continuing to move forward with the passage of two bills to improve the management and oversight of the National Foundation for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to expand access to health care for the underinsured by helping them navigate the health care system,” Enzi said Wednesday.

“S.655 follows similar legislation that we passed earlier this year to update activities at the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I am pleased that we will be making similar changes to the Foundation at the CDC, which will promote more efficient use of government funds.”

To ensure that the CDC Foundation is more in line with the recent HELP Committee actions affecting the NIH Foundation, Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA) agreed to two minor changes to the original bill, including setting a maximum transfer amount of \$1,250,000 and adding additional reporting requirements of the CDC Foundation for funds transferred from the CDC to the CDC Foundation.

Specifically, the CDC Foundation bill extends fellowships within the CDC Foundation to the full duration of the grant or private funding, along with allowing for in-kind donations, separate of cash, from the CDC to the CDC Foundation. Finally, the bill raises the maximum allocation of funds transferred from the CDC to the CDC Foundation from \$500,000 to \$1,250,000.

“S.898, the Patient Navigator legislation will assist individuals in making their health care choices by providing access to services that help them move through the health care system,” Enzi said.

“Navigating the health care system can be a hard journey for many people, especially when they are poor, underinsured, or uninsured. Helping more Americans stay healthy and overcome barriers to health care – from screening to diagnosis, treatment and beyond – is the idea behind S.898,” Enzi added. “By modeling this demonstration program after similar programs which have shown great promise, we will help ensure that we can assist individuals in navigating the difficult health care system.”

S.898 authorizes a five-year demonstration program to provide community access to patient navigators – individuals who are trained to assist people working to navigate the difficult health care system.

“This bill represents a truly bipartisan effort and I look forward to having it signed into law this year,” Enzi added.