



For Immediate Release

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Friday, February 15, 2008

***ENZI: MEDICARE REFORM PROPOSAL IS THE FIRST STEP  
TOWARD MUCH-NEEDED ENTITLEMENT REFORM***

**Washington D.C.** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today voiced support for a proposal submitted by the President that he said would, “take the first steps toward broad Medicare reform and help place that critical program on a sustainable path to ensure that seniors can receive the medical care and prescription drugs they need for generations to come.”

“Medicare is on an unsustainable path and will not be able to continue meeting the needs of America’s patients and adequately reimbursing the health care providers who serve Medicare clients without real, comprehensive reform,” Enzi said. “This proposal is a critical first step toward broad Medicare reform to modernize and stabilize Medicare for generations to come.”

Enzi, one the Senate’s most outspoken proponents of meaningful budget reform, said the package that the President sent Congress includes provisions to improve the quality of care and reduce costs by expanding the use of health information technology, bringing greater transparency to allow patients to compare costs of services, providing incentives for high-quality, low cost care, and introducing medical liability reform. As required under the law, the Administration sent the proposal to Congress today after determining that proposed Medicare spending for 2009 will require borrowing trillions of dollars from the nation’s general treasury.

“We need to keep a tight focus on increasing customer service, providing broad coverage flexibility, reducing paperwork and ensuring high quality care in the Medicare program,” Enzi said. “This proposal maintains that focus and moves us in the right direction toward Medicare reform.”

The proposal reduces Medicare spending by linking Medicare part D premiums to income so that low income and middle income taxpayers do not continue to subsidize higher-income older persons.

“Decreasing the deficit by controlling spending is essential,” he added. “I applaud the President’s efforts to balance the budget and think the Senate can go even farther to straighten out the financial matters of this country.”

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