

United States Senate Committee on Finance

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: GAO report on hospital quality data
Da: Friday, May 4, 2007

Sen. Max Baucus, chairman of the Committee on Finance, and Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member, have worked and continue to work to ensure that federal health care programs such as Medicare collect data on the quality of care offered to beneficiaries by providers. The senators today released a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, "Hospital Quality Data/HHS Should Specify Steps and Time Frame for Using Information Technology to Collect and Submit Data," GAO-07-320, and made the following comments on the report. The report will be posted at www.gao.gov.

Baucus comment –

“Once again, GAO has produced a valuable report. This study highlights the importance of information technology to health care. The report shows that IT can vastly enhance the collection and sharing of data on the quality of care available in American hospitals. More data can help us better determine the quality of care that America is getting with its Medicare and Medicaid dollars. I hope that CMS recognizes how important information technology is to the mission of providing care.”

Grassley comment –

“This study shows how information technology can facilitate the measurement and reporting of health care quality data. As CMS increases the number of quality measures for hospitals to report, the need will greatly increase for IT systems that can assist hospitals in all steps of the quality data collection and reporting process. CMS plays an important role in the promotion of health IT. It’s critical that the agency be able to track its progress in this regard.”