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Grassley says independent reviews of FDA employee misconduct will better serve public

WASHINGTON — Sen. Chuck Grassley is praising the Inspector General for the Department of Health and Human Services for restoring independence to investigations of potential criminal misconduct by employees of the Food and Drug Administration.

“No other agency within the Department has the kind of joint authority that the FDA had gotten for itself almost ten years ago,” Grassley said. “Cutting the tie is good for the public. It strengthens the role of the Inspector General. And in our system, the Inspectors General are vitally important independent watchdogs within the federal bureaucracy.”

Effective tomorrow, the Inspector General will no longer share responsibility for these investigations with the FDA itself, as it has since 1998, when a memorandum of understanding was negotiated giving a role to the FDA. The Inspector General notified the Commissioner of the FDA in September of its decision to withdraw from the agreement. All cases are expected to be transferred by next April.

Grassley has conducted active oversight of the FDA since 2004, and has questioned the validity and integrity of internal FDA investigations of alleged employee misconduct and wrongdoing.

Copies of documents concerning the memorandum of understanding between the Food and Drug Administration and the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Health and Human Services are posted with this news release at <http://finance.senate.gov>.