



For Immediate Release
June 24, 2010

Contact:

Scott Mulhauser/Erin Shields (Baucus)
Jill Gerber (Grassley)
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS, GRASSLEY PRAISE HOUSE PASSAGE OF BILL TO REVERSE DOCTOR PAYMENT CUT

*Bipartisan Bill to Preserve Access to Doctors, Reverse 21 Percent Payment Cut
through November Passed Senate Last Week, Heads to President for Signature*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) today applauded House passage of legislation to reverse a 21 percent payment cut for doctors in Medicare and TRICARE and update the flawed physician payment formula through November 30, 2010. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) began to implement the payment cut last Friday. This legislation, which passed the Senate on Friday and is fully paid-for, reverses that payment cut and provides a retroactive update to ensure seniors and military families will continue to have access to their doctors.

“This bill ensures seniors and military families get the access they depend on to the doctors they trust,” Baucus said. **“We are now a step closer to continuing to protect these seniors and service members and their health care coverage by ensuring their doctors get the payments they need. Our House colleagues deserve praise for standing with us today to help fulfill our responsibility to seniors and military families in Montana and across the country.”**

“This legislation reverses a payment cut that is jeopardizing access to physician services for Medicare beneficiaries and military families,” Grassley said. **“This action was critically needed so there’s no disruption in services for anyone.”**

The 21 percent payment cut, which is a result of the flawed Medicare physician payment system, known as the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula, took effect June 1. CMS placed a temporary hold on the processing of Medicare reimbursement claims to delay implementing the reduced doctor payments. Unfortunately, the agency was forced to begin processing Medicare claims with the 21 percent payment cut last Friday in order to reimburse doctors’ offices for their services.

This bill would reverse this payment cut retroactively so seniors and military families will continue to have access to their doctors through Medicare and TRICARE. The bill, authored by Baucus and Grassley in the Senate, now heads to President Obama for his signature.

Legislative text and a summary of this bill, H.R. 3962, the Preservation of Access to Care for Medicare Beneficiaries and Pension Relief Act, is available on the Finance Committee Website at:
<http://finance.senate.gov/legislation/details/?id=bed977dc-5056-a032-520f-49d7b04df18f>.

###