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September 21, 2011

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HATCH STATEMENT AT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING EXAMINING WAYS TO IMPROVE CARE, LOWER COSTS FOR DUALY-ELIGIBLES

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, delivered the following opening statement at a committee hearing examining innovative solutions to improve care and lower costs for patients who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid programs:

Thank you, Chairman Baucus, for holding this hearing. I believe our topic today represents an area where we can achieve some real bipartisan solutions that will lower health care costs and save lives.

There are more than 9 million Americans who are eligible for both the Medicare and Medicaid programs, commonly known as the *dual-eligibles*.

These patients typically suffer from multiple chronic conditions and also have long-term care needs.

In addition to complicated medical issues, payment for their care is generally siloed between complex Medicare and Medicaid payment rules, and this creates inefficiencies and many unnecessary complications.

Care for these individuals is also very expensive with annual spending topping \$300 billion in Medicare and Medicaid dollars.

In my home state of Utah, just 10 percent of Medicaid beneficiaries are duals, but 26 percent of the state's Medicaid expenditures go for care of these patients.

Many states have taken the lead to develop innovative solutions for dual-eligibles, such as the Community Care of North Carolina model or the Star Plus program in Texas. We need to help them build on these successes.

The federal government has also designed models to address care for dual eligible such as Special Needs Plans in Medicare Advantage or the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the

Elderly, which is known as PACE.

While these approaches have made a difference, there is much more work to do to ensure that every dual-eligible gets better care and that taxpayers get better value for their dollars.

I look forward to hearing from Melanie Bella, Director of the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Ms. Bella has taken both a pragmatic approach to problem-solving and a compassionate approach to improving patient care.

As Congress contemplates reforms to lower our entitlement program spending and to improve the quality of care, the topic of this hearing is an important place to start.

Clearly, the status quo isn't serving taxpayers well and it isn't serving patients well. We can do better, and I believe that we can do that in a bipartisan way.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for scheduling this important and timely discussion. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

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