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BAUCUS CELEBRATES IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Baucus lauds program's success cited in CMS special report released today

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) celebrated the first anniversary of the reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) today. One year ago, President Barack Obama signed the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA), preserving health care coverage for as many as 6.7 million low-income, American children and providing new coverage for more than four million additional children.

"Today, we celebrate the Children's Health Insurance Program and all the good it does to keep America's children healthy. CHIP has been hugely successful in keeping low-income children covered and expanding coverage to millions more. In the past year, we have made this program even stronger with robust funding and an emphasis on outreach and enrollment to ensure every eligible child benefits from the program."

Baucus has been a long-time champion of CHIP, a program that provides health benefits to uninsured children in working families who cannot afford private coverage. The reauthorization of CHIP last year came after over two years of hard work by Baucus and Senators Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

CHIPRA built on the original CHIP legislation in expanding coverage and improving outreach and enrollment efforts. According to a report released today by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), more than half of the states leveraged the flexibility in CHIPRA to improve children's coverage. Specifically, CMS reported that 15 states expanded eligibility levels in their Medicaid/CHIP programs since the enactment of CHIPRA so that today, all but two states offer coverage to children with family incomes up to at least 200 percent of the Federal poverty level (\$44,100 for a family of four). CMS also reported that an additional 2.6 million children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP during that time.

"The news that more than half of the states have strengthened their CHIP programs to help more low-income families in the past year means CHIP is doing exactly what it is supposed to do – expanding coverage to millions of American children. And I'm proud to say that my home state of Montana is among the 15 states with newly-expanded programs – Montana CHIP now covers kids up to 250 percent of the Federal poverty line."

The full report from CMS titled "CHIPRA One Year Later: Connecting Kids to Coverage" can be found at:
http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/chip/chipra_anniversary_report.pdf

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