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Contact: Erin Shields
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS COMMENDS HEALTH GROUPS' PROPOSAL TO EXPAND MEDICAID

Finance Chairman says Medicaid best way to cover low-income, uninsured Americans

Washington, D.C. – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented today after two seemingly disparate health care organizations, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) and Families USA, a consumer advocacy group dedicated to improving access to affordable health coverage, joined forces to propose a plan for expanding Medicaid. The collaboration of the influential trade and consumer groups, often at opposite ends of the political spectrum, reflects wide support for the idea. Chairman Baucus has said that increasing eligibility for Medicaid will be an important element of health care reform, which is the Finance Committee's top priority in 2009.

"Increasing Medicaid access is a critical part of health care reform. It is a quick and efficient way to cover all low-income Americans, bringing us closer to the ultimate goal of coverage for all," Baucus said. **"I commend PhRMA and Families USA for coming together to propose greater coverage through Medicaid. Their partnership highlights the broad-based support for this plan and keeps the momentum moving forward."**

Medicaid is a vital source of coverage for low-income Americans, covering approximately 61 million people. Current state Medicaid programs do not cover everyone living below the poverty level. While many states choose to cover some adults under Medicaid, such coverage is limited and inconsistent. Expanding Medicaid as part of comprehensive health care reform will streamline the system and provide vital coverage to millions more Americans.

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