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## **BAUCUS HAILS SIGNING OF LAW ENSURING SENIORS, MILITARY FAMILIES CONTINUED ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY DOCTORS**

*Law Ensures Doctors Can Continue Seeing Medicare, Tricare Patients*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today applauded the signing of legislation extending through 2011 a fix to the Medicare physician payment formula to ensure seniors and military families can continue seeing their doctors. The legislation ensures Medicare and Tricare, the health care program for active-duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, retirees and their families, will continue paying physicians who participate in those programs at current levels. Baucus, along with Senate Majority Harry Reid (D-Nev.), Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Finance Committee Ranking Member Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), introduced the bill and worked to pass it through the Senate last week.

**“America’s seniors and military families deserve to receive the care they need from the doctors they know and trust,”** said Baucus. **“This law promises our seniors and military families in Montana and across the country continued access to their doctors, treatments and medicines and the peace of mind of knowing they can continue relying on the medical professionals they trust.”**

The law, the Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010, will avoid a 25-percent cut to Medicare physician payments under the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula that would otherwise go into effect on January 1, 2011. The law also includes extensions of other expiring health care provisions, including protections for rural hospitals and doctors, Transitional Medical Assistance and the Special Diabetes Program.

The law is fully paid for by modifying the policy regarding overpayments of the health care affordability tax credit. This policy does not change the tax credits for which people are eligible based on their income. Instead, the law will change the way people pay back overpayments when they have received more credit than they are eligible for because, for example, they earned more money than expected in a given year.

The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over the Medicare program and the physician payment formula, which also sets payment levels for the Tricare program. A summary and legislative text of the Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act of 2010 can be found on the Finance Committee website <http://finance.senate.gov/legislation/>.

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