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Contact: Communications Office  
(202) 224-4515

## **BAUCUS: HEALTH REFORM REDUCING COSTS FOR SENIORS, INCREASING BENEFITS**

### **Finance Chairman Applauds HHS Announcement Showing Seniors' Medicare Part D Premiums Decreased**

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) applauded the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announcement today that the premiums seniors pay for prescription drug coverage in the Medicare Part D program decreased this year, for the first time since 2007. Baucus was a chief architect of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the health reform law which instituted many of the provisions that helped bring down seniors' out-of-pocket costs.

**"In this tough economy, we need to help seniors save every dollar they can,"** said Baucus. **"The health care law is reducing seniors' out-of-pocket costs while providing more benefits, like free screenings and check-ups, and closing the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap, known as the donut hole, once and for all. The free visits and screenings for seniors that the health care law created are helping doctors detect problems earlier, which saves lives and saves money."**

HHS also announced 17 million people with Medicare have received free preventive services this year while 900,000 Medicare beneficiaries who hit the prescription drug donut hole have received a 50 percent discount on their prescription drugs. Health reform provides the HHS Secretary with increased authority to scrutinize bids from private plans offering prescription drug benefits for Medicare beneficiaries. This authority ensures Medicare beneficiaries receive the best possible premium for prescription drug plans.

As part of health reform, Baucus helped create new benefits for seniors, including a free Annual Wellness Visit. Thanks to Medicare's new Annual Wellness Visit, seniors are now discussing concerns with their doctor, reviewing tips for preventing illness and learning new ways to better manage chronic conditions like diabetes. In Montana and across the country, seniors are saving money on prescription drugs thanks to expanded coverage in the Medicare prescription drug benefit – savings that will only grow when the coverage donut hole closes entirely over the coming years.

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