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Contact: Dan Virkstis
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS, GEITHNER TALK BUDGET SOLUTIONS TO HEALTH CARE REFORM

Finance Chairman to Treasury Secretary: "We must find savings within the system"

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today discussed with Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner various aspects of the President's Fiscal Year 2010 budget, particularly revenue-generating proposals designed to help offset the cost of health care reform. Baucus, who intends to advance comprehensive health reform legislation this year, raised a proposal from his "Call to Action" blueprint for health reform that would cap the dollar amount of employer-provided health care benefits that can be excluded from an employee's income for tax purposes. Baucus has said that an alternative proposal in the President's budget, to limit itemized tax deductions for some American taxpayers in order to defray costs of reform, would require more study by the Finance Committee.

"The Director of the Office of Management and Budget said that the path to economic recovery is through health care reform. I agree, and I'm pleased that the President's budget addresses reform as an American imperative. This budget makes a good pitch for a down payment on health care reform," said Baucus. **"My concern, frankly, is the viability of the down payment and how it will help Congress contain the costs associated with reforming the health care system. I think we need to look first for resources within the existing health care system. I encourage the administration to dig down deeper within the health care system to find savings."**

Secretary Geithner agreed that health care reform is critical to the American economy and to small businesses.

"These are broad principles," said Geithner. **"The President and I want to work with Congress on a package that meets those principles. We wanted to put everything on the table for consideration."**

Chairman Baucus will participate in the President's Health Care Summit at the White House tomorrow.

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