



For Immediate Release
October 20, 2010

Contact: Scott Mulhauser/Erin Shields
(202) 224-4515

BAUCUS SPEECH HONORS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

In Statement, Baucus Applauds Progress on Women's Health, Pledges to Continue the Work

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) released the following statement today in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In the statement, he applauded the significant gains made in improving women's health, most recently illustrated by the free mammograms and other preventive coverage included in the nation's new health care law, the Affordable Care Act. Baucus also praised non-profit organizations like Susan G. Komen for the Cure, but asserted that there is work yet to be done. Baucus will include today's statement in the Congressional Record when Congress reconvenes next month.

*Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Statement of Senator Max Baucus
October 2010*

Mr. President, Women are the backbone of the American family and a driving force of our economy. They are our mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters. Women are the heart of American families and local communities.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and this October, we have many reasons to reflect and celebrate. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the public and private sectors, we've come a long way to ensuring that women have long, healthy lives.

Twenty years ago, Congress created the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Today, the program provides screening services for breast and cervical cancer in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five U.S. territories, and 12 American Indian or Alaska Native tribes and tribal organizations. Since the program got started, almost four million women have been served — giving them access to breast and cervical cancer screenings that they otherwise could not afford.

And we've recently expanded opportunities for women across the country to be screened by including free preventive care, like mammograms and cervical cancer screenings, in the new health care reform law. The Affordable Care Act eliminates all insurance co-pays for these screenings, which means more women will have access to early detection and more women's lives will be saved.

This October, we're also celebrating the 30th anniversary of the beginnings of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, an organization founded on Susan's sister's promise to end breast cancer forever. Today, Susan G. Komen for the Cure is the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer, investing nearly \$1.5 billion in grassroots advocacy for quality care and research.

These efforts have made a big difference. In the last 30 years, we've improved the rate of cancer screenings — increasing the percentage of women over 40 who receive regular mammograms from less than 30 to nearly 75 percent. We've improved the treatment outcomes for women with cancer — increasing the 5-year survival rate from 74 percent to 98 percent. We've also increased the amount of Federal funding going toward breast cancer research, prevention, and treatment — ensuring that American women benefit from the best that science has to offer.

Despite these advances, it is estimated that nearly 40,000 women will die of breast cancer this year. That means that 40,000 American families will lose their mother or grandmother, sister or daughter. We cannot let up in this fight. We made a commitment to improving women's health in health reform — ending insurance industry abuses that have disproportionately affected women for decades, providing preventive benefits tailored to meet women's unique health needs, and ensuring women of all ages have access to comprehensive, high quality coverage.

Improving women's health has a positive effect on the whole family. According to the Department of Labor, women make four out of five health care decisions for their families and are more likely to be the caregivers when family members are ill.

Improving women's health also has a positive effect on the economy. A healthy pregnancy, for example, begins with a healthy woman and leads to long, productive lives for mother and child.

We've come a long way, but we're not there yet. I'm confident that with the consistent efforts of Congress and private sector groups like Susan G. Komen for the Cure, we'll continue to make progress for years to come.

###