



For Immediate Release
November 16, 2010

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**BAUCUS TOUTS NEW, INNOVATIVE PATIENT PROTECTIONS
TO REDUCE PREVENTABLE DEATHS, SAVE TAXPAYER MONEY**

*Finance Chairman Helped Craft Provisions in Health Care Law to Protect Seniors in Medicare,
Reduce Hospital Readmissions, Cut Wasteful Spending*

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today touted new protections and innovations for seniors in Medicare, following the release of a new report showing how sorely needed these new protections are. The policies, which Baucus helped create in the new health care law, will reduce preventable illnesses and deaths among the more than one quarter of Medicare beneficiaries who have experienced adverse events while in the hospital, according to the new report released today. The report, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General, found that 13.5 percent of Medicare beneficiaries experienced serious adverse events in hospitals in 2008, while another 13.5 percent experienced less serious adverse events – resulting in 180,000 deaths, almost half of which were preventable, a year and an estimated \$4.4 billion in wasteful spending.

“Prior to health reform, Medicare was paying for the same care twice and losing money when patients were readmitted to the hospital due to preventable problems. The patient protections in health reform rightfully reward doctors and hospitals who get the job done right the first time – saving thousands of lives and billions of taxpayer dollars,” said Baucus. **“Health reform makes Medicare stronger, better coordinated and more efficient by giving doctors incentives to work together to deliver better care and by helping hospitals to reduce the rates of unnecessary readmissions for seniors and hospital acquired infections.”**

Through the Affordable Care Act, Baucus helped create a new Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, often called the Innovation Center, which was formally established today to examine new ways to protect patients and pay health care providers that can save money for Medicare and Medicaid while improving the quality of care for beneficiaries. Baucus also fought to include targeted provisions in the Affordable Care Act like the hospital readmissions and reduction program to reduce hospital readmission rates and wasteful payments. These programs incentivize doctors and hospitals to reduce preventable hospital infections and other adverse events and to treat patients effectively the first time, rather than readmit the patient a second time.

The full HHS Office of Inspector General report, entitled “Adverse Events in Hospitals: National Incidence Among Medicare Beneficiaries,” can be found here: <http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-06-09-00090.pdf>

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