

United States Senate

For Immediate Release

April 20, 2009

Contact:

Anthony Coley (Kennedy)

224-2633

Erin Shields (Baucus)

224-4515

Kennedy, Baucus Affirm Commitment to Health Reform This Year, Announce Early June Mark-up of Legislation

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) today affirmed their mutual intention to move forward on major health care reform in the 111th Congress. In a letter to President Barack Obama, Baucus and Kennedy reiterated their commitment to moving health reform legislation in the Senate this year, and announced that their committees will mark-up comprehensive health care reform legislation in early June.

Over the past several months, Baucus and Kennedy have been working together on plans to reform America's health care system. The text of the Senators' letter follows here:

April 20, 2009

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For nearly a year, we have been working together toward the shared goal of significant reforms to our health care system. We must act swiftly, because the cost of inaction is too high for individuals, families, businesses, state and federal governments. Comprehensive health care reform legislation will responsibly contain costs, improve quality, enhance disease prevention, and provide coverage to all Americans. We are committed to working with you, and with our colleagues in Congress, to enact legislation to achieve these long-overdue reforms without delay. We are writing to you today to let you know of the schedule for committee action that we intend to follow to meet this goal.

Since our committees share jurisdiction over health care reform legislation in the Senate, we have jointly laid out an aggressive schedule to accomplish our goal. Both committees plan to mark-up legislation in early June. Our intention is for that legislation to be very similar, and to

reflect a shared approach to reform, so that the measures that our two committees report can be quickly merged into a single bill for consideration on the Senate floor.

The unprecedented level of funding devoted to health care reform in your budget this year leaves no doubt about your commitment to the goals of expanding coverage, reducing costs, and improving health and health care. We have a moral duty to ensure that every American can get quality health care. We must act to contain the growth of health care costs to ensure our economic stability; to help American businesses deal with the health care challenge; and to make sure that we are getting our money's worth. With your continued leadership and commitment, and working together, we remain certain that our goal of enacting comprehensive health care reform can be accomplished with the urgency that the American people rightly demand.

Respectfully yours,

Senator Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Chairman
Senate HELP Committee