



Remarks of Sen. Chuck Grassley for Roundtable Discussion on Coverage
Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of the participants of this roundtable discussion. Most everybody agrees our health care system needs fixing. The American health care system – if you can even call it a system -- is in desperate need of reforms. We spend twice as much on health care as other developed countries. But even with all this spending, our health outcomes are often half as good. We have escalating costs, inefficient delivery systems, and 47 million people who lack health coverage at some point during the year. Millions more live in fear of losing coverage. We need to figure out how to get affordable coverage to everyone. And we must make these reforms in a fiscally responsible way. We need to bring costs under control.

In March, Senator Baucus and I joined other Members of Congress and various stakeholders at a White House forum on health care. In bringing everyone together, it was clear we agree on a lot of issues and still have a long way to go on others. But overall I left the White House knowing that Republicans and Democrats share a commitment to expanding health insurance coverage and improving the way care is paid for and delivered in this country.

Last week, we had our first roundtable on delivery system reforms. I think it went pretty well. Now we are moving on to the tougher issues. There are more controversial issues when it comes to coverage. Individual mandates, government-run public plan options, and federal health boards are some of the issues that come up. There are no easy issues when it comes to coverage. We are here today to share ideas and weigh in on all the coverage issues that we need to tackle. If we are to succeed in making real changes that benefit millions of Americans, all of us are going to have to listen and consider many ideas. On all of these tough issues, we need to find solutions that work. Everyone needs to work together to find common ground. I am very appreciative that all of you have come here today to help with that process. Working together, we can make a difference and improve our health care system.