



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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Statement Of U.S. Senator Baucus on Medicaid Advisory Commission

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) Today, U.S. Senator Max Baucus issued the following statement after Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt announced members of the Medicaid Advisory Commission.

Baucus said today's announcement of the Medicaid Advisory Commission members fails to ensure a balanced commission to strengthen Medicaid. Baucus also expressed concern with the time the commission was given to develop policy recommendations. The commission is expected to have recommendations completed by September 1, 2005. The statement follows:

“Today, Secretary Leavitt appointed members of the administration's Medicaid Commission. I have said all along that Medicaid deserves to be studied closely before major changes are made.

“However, I remain concerned about the lack of balance and independence of this commission. To be credible, this commission should have balanced representation of all viewpoints and operate independently of the administration. It is still not clear that this commission will meet this standard.

“And I still do not think requiring an outside commission to recommend proposals to meet an arbitrary budget target of \$10 billion in Medicaid savings is the right approach. Developing budget savings proposals is Congress' job. The commission should instead focus on the right policies to strengthen our safety net, not work towards an arbitrary budget number.

“The allotted time for the commission to complete its September 1 recommendations is also troubling. Six weeks is not enough time for a commission to develop the thoughtful approach that was intended. I hope the Secretary will reconsider this goal.”

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