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Coburn Applauds Congressional Leaders and Bush Administration for Lifting Objection to Prioritizing Treatment in PEPFAR Reauthorization

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Senator Tom Coburn, M.D. (R-OK), a practicing physician who has treated patients with HIV/AIDS, today announced a tentative agreement on the PEPFAR reauthorization legislation. Dr. Coburn supported the original PEPFAR legislation when he served as co-chair of President Bush's Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS prior to being elected to the U.S. Senate.

"I'm pleased that authors of the Senate bill reauthorizing PEPFAR lifted their objection to prioritizing HIV/AIDS treatment in a program that has always been about saving lives. Completely removing the requirement that a majority of PEPFAR funds go to treatment would have turned a Marshall Plan-like response to the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa into a Katrina-like response. I'm encouraged the Bush administration and congressional leaders decided to restore much of this key provision that has been so integral to PEPFAR's success," Dr. Coburn said.

"Senator Reid should bring this bill to the Senate floor for a vote and full debate by the end of July. As Majority Leader, Senator Reid has always had the power to debate this bill whenever he wished. It's time for him to exercise that power and reaffirm to the world America's commitment to saving lives and combating HIV/AIDS in Africa," Dr. Coburn said.

The original PEPFAR legislation required that 55 percent of PEPFAR funds be spent for life saving medical care for people with HIV/AIDS. The tentative agreement reached today requires that "more than half" of bilateral AIDS funding be spent for treatment.

For more information go to Dr. Coburn's subcommittee website
<http://coburn.senate.gov/ffm/>