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**CHAIRMAN ENZI OPENS HEARINGS TO EXAMINE IMPACT OF DRUG  
IMPORTS, EXAMINE FDA'S ABILITY TO ENSURE SAFETY**

Washington, D.C. – Opening the first of two hearings focusing on prescription drug importation, U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today said he believes a plan to import prescription drugs from other countries and still maintain the level of safety and effectiveness that Americans demand can be developed, but cautioned that, true to the old cliché, “the Devil is in the details.”

“If we’re going to open our borders to prescription medications we had better be sure about how we’re going to do it and how it will operate in the short and long runs,” Enzi said Wednesday. “We have to do it right and ensure our questions are answered before we put such a program in place.”

Today’s hearing, called by Enzi, the Committee’s new Chairman, examined the report of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Task Force on Drug Importation, which was issued in December, 2004. The Task Force, mandated by the “Medicare Modernization Act,” identified challenges that must be addressed if the U.S. creates a feasible drug importation system.

Enzi cited the explosive growth of the Internet as a catalyst that is driving up demand among American consumers for imported drugs. “People probably wouldn’t be considering ordering drugs from overseas except we’ve gotten used to the Internet and have found advantages that it provides,” Enzi said.

“I do believe we can develop a plan to import prescription drugs from other countries and still maintain a level of safety and effectiveness Americans have come to expect and demand. In fact drug reimportation can’t happen unless we guarantee those things,” he added.