

News from the

**U.S. Senate Committee on
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions**

Michael B. Enzi (Wyoming), Chairman



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Enzi Joins Senate Rural Health Caucus in Calling for Retention of Funding Levels for Rural Health Programs

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee) today joined fellow members of the Senate Rural Health Caucus in requesting that the Fiscal Year 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill retain the Senate-passed funding levels for rural health programs when the conference committee resumes negotiations.

“It is vital that rural health care programs receive proper funding,” Enzi said. “These programs play an important role in providing health services to those who live in medically underserved areas, such as my home state of Wyoming.”

In a letter addressed to Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), the Subcommittee’s Ranking Member, Enzi, along with Senator Craig Thomas (R-WY), Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND), and others, wrote that “while current spending for all rural health discretionary programs is relatively small, it plays a critical role in solidifying the fragile health care infrastructure common in rural communities.”

The Senate’s FY 2006 budget resolution included a \$100 million rural health amendment which would restore full funding for several important rural health initiatives such as the rural health flexibility grant program, rural health outreach grants, the small hospital improvement program, tele-health, trauma care, and rural access to emergency devices programs.

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