

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**SUMMARY INCLUDED BELOW

KENNEDY ON INCREASE IN INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES FUNDING

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy released the following statement in response to budget amendment #4198, which will increase the amount allocated to Indian Health Services by \$1 billion.

“I strongly support the additional \$1 billion provided under this amendment for the Indian Health Services. The funds will be used to meet the urgent needs of Native Americans for medical and preventive health services in hospitals and clinics. These native peoples have long suffered poor health, greater sickness, and higher death rates than all other Americans, and we can ignore them no longer.

This amendment is long overdue, and it is obviously only a first step. We intend to continue the battle to end once and for all the shameful health disparities faced by Native Americans.”

Summary of Amendment #4198

Amendment to increase by \$1 billion the amount budgeted for the Indian Health programs in Indian Health Services (both Services and Facilities) for FY09.

Offered by Dorgan

This amendment would increase the amount budgeted for Indian health programs in fiscal year 2009 by \$1 billion to ensure we raise the health status of Indians and Urban Indians, a target set forth within the CDC’s Healthy People 2010 report.

The American Indian and Alaska Native people have long experienced lower health status when compared with other Americans. They have lower life expectancy and disproportionate burden of disease. This amendment ensures that we adequately fund health services for the growing population of eligible American Indians and Alaska Natives who rely on the United States to provide health service to reduce health disparities and health access barriers through direct medical care, the use of preventive health care services and the expanded use of information technology in partnership with Tribes.

The Budget Committee’s budget bill increases IHS’ budget by \$536 million above the baseline. The amendment adds an additional \$1 billion, to help meet the Health People 2010 target. This proposed increase in IHS’ budget is offset by function 920.

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