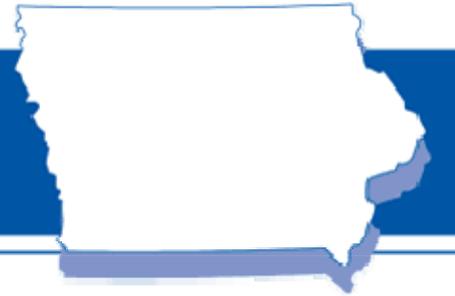


*U.S. Senator*

**TOM HARKIN** OF IOWA



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HARKIN CONGRATULATES DR. REGINA BENJAMIN ON SENATE CONFIRMATION AS U.S. SURGEON GENERAL**

**Says Dr. Benjamin will Usher in a New Era of Prevention and Wellness  
at the Highest Levels of Public Health**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, today issued the following statement following Senate confirmation of Dr. Regina Benjamin, of Alabama, to be U.S. Surgeon General. The HELP Committee approved Dr. Benjamin’s nomination on October 7, 2009.

“Dr. Regina Benjamin has been a trailblazer in the medical field for over two decades. She has devoted her career to ensuring that Americans receive the best possible health care, regardless of their financial situation. With so many urgent public health needs facing our country – the H1N1 virus among them – Dr. Benjamin’s confirmation as Surgeon General could not have come at a better time.

“I am personally encouraged by Dr. Regina Benjamin’s commitment to prevention and wellness. As we move in Congress to enact health reform that puts a sharp new emphasis on keeping Americans healthy, rather than treating them once they become ill, it is reassuring to know that we have a Surgeon General who will back our efforts at the highest levels of public health.

“I congratulate her on this Senate confirmation and wish her well in her new post.”