



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield  
(202) 224-6770

Thursday, March 29, 2007

## ***SENATE PASSES HELP COMMITTEE BILL TO PREVENT DEATHS FROM TRAUMATIC INJURY***

**Washington D.C.** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today cheered Senate passage of the “Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act of 2007,” a bill that reauthorizes a program to prevent deaths from traumatic injuries by encouraging states to develop coordinated trauma care plans delivering a full range of care to injured patients.

The bill, H.R. 727, passed in the House of Representatives on March 27. It is nearly identical to S. 657, which the HELP Committee approved on March 15.

“Survival among severely injured patients requires specialist care delivered promptly and in a coordinated manner, from the scene of injury, through the emergency room, and on into the hospital, operating room and intensive care unit,” Enzi said. “This bill will encourage states to develop trauma care systems that can provide optimal response and care through advanced planning, preparation, and coordination.”

“I applaud my colleagues in the Senate for acting so quickly to pass this critical legislation, and I look forward to sending it to the President to sign into law.”

A trauma system is an organized, coordinated effort in a defined geographic area that delivers the full range of care to all injured patients. It provides resources, supporting equipment, and personnel along a continuum of care including pre-hospital, hospital, and rehabilitation services. The “Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act” provides grants to states for planning, implementing, and developing trauma care systems.

“About 20,000 to 25,000 trauma deaths are preventable each year, but patients in many areas do not receive the full range of care that they need because trauma care systems are not in place,” Enzi said. “Individuals in rural areas, who must often travel long distances to receive care, are particularly vulnerable to death by traumatic injury - the death rate from unintentional injury is more than 50 percent higher in rural areas than in urban areas. This bill help ensure that necessary programs are in place to save lives after traumatic injuries occur.”

Traumatic injury, from incidents like motor vehicle accidents, firearms, falls, and natural disasters, is the leading cause of death for people aged 1 to 44 years. Each year, about 1 out of 4 Americans sustain an injury requiring medical attention.

S. 657 reauthorizes and improves the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act by:

- Allowing the Secretary of Health and Human Services to work to collect and analyze trauma patient data nationally;
- Requiring states to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their trauma care systems;
- Increasing the authorization level to \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2008, \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, and \$8,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through 2012; and,
- Developing model curricula for EMS training, and requiring the Secretary to record achievement and problems experienced by states, with special consideration to the unique situation of rural areas.

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