



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI: HELP COMMITTEE APPROVES CRITICAL BILLS TO  
ENHANCE PUBLIC HEALTH***

**Washington D.C.** – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today said he is pleased that the HELP Committee approved a series of bills to enhance the public health, including measures to fight childhood cancer, enhance the nation’s defenses against tuberculosis, detect childhood diseases at birth, and renew programs to ensure that rural and underserved communities have a lifeline to dependable, high-quality medical care. Enzi praised the Committee’s action and said he will work with colleagues to make additional improvements to the bills before bringing them to the full Senate for debate.

Enzi spoke on the following bills, which the HELP Committee approved today:

- **S. 911, Conquer Childhood Cancer Act** – Expands, enhances, and intensifies pediatric cancer research programs.

“We need to do more to fight childhood cancer, and this bill includes important provisions to expand and coordinate pediatric cancer research efforts. However, I am concerned that pieces of this bill may undo some of the good work we did last year to reform the National Institutes of Health. In the NIH reform bill, we emphasized that NIH should determine research priorities on the basis of scientific merit, not Congressional earmarks. I am hopeful that we will be able to work through this concern before bringing the bill to the Senate floor.”

- **S. 1551, Comprehensive Tuberculosis Elimination Act** – Provides additional authorities to NIH and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to control domestic tuberculosis more effectively.

“The fight to control and prevent TB is one that should focus on marshalling and better coordinating the resources not only of federal agencies, but also state efforts, local efforts, and those of private sector drug innovation, along with the tremendous resources already being deployed through charitable and corporate collaborations. This bill reauthorizes existing authority and focuses resources on this topic.”

- **S. 1858, Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act** – Updates the authorities of the Health Resources and Services Administration for newborn screening activities, including specific provisions related to laboratory quality.

“As I was reminded with the birth of my granddaughter recently, within 48 hours of a child's birth, a sample of blood is obtained from a ‘heel stick,’ and the blood is analyzed for treatable diseases. Accurate screening ensures that affected babies are identified quickly, potential cases of disease are not missed, and early treatment begins to prevent negative health outcomes for affected newborns. Thousands of children are living healthy and productive lives as a result of newborn screening. However, we can always do more, which is what the new bill before us strives to do.”

- **S. 1382, ALS Registry Act** – Authorizes CDC to provide a registry (or electronic form of collecting data) for those with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or similar disorders.

“The cause of ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, remains elusive. Studies have found relationships between ALS and environmental and genetic factors, but those relationships are not well understood. This bill provides for a national registry in order to learn more about this disease and possible risks.”

- **S. 1970, Addressing the Disaster Needs of Children Act of 2007** – Creates a commission to study issues related to children and all hazards, disasters, and emergencies.

“Hurricane Katrina exposed many of these problems with our nation's ability to meet the needs of children during disasters. Two years later, only 45 percent of New Orleans schools have reopened. Experiences like these illustrate the importance of examining the special needs of children in preparation for, response to, and recovery from emergencies and disasters. This legislation does exactly that, and I am happy to support it.”

- **S. 901, the Health Care Safety Net Act of 2007** – Reauthorizes the Health Centers program, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program, and the Rural Health Care Services Outreach grant program for five years.

“Community Health Centers are a critical piece of the health care safety net and a vital piece of our health care system. Health Centers provide regular access to high quality health care to people living in rural and underserved areas, regardless of their ability to pay. The number of Health Centers continues to rise and more people are getting the kind of high quality health care they have come to rely on every day.

“The National Health Service Corps assists Health Professional Shortage Areas in all parts of the United States to meet their primary care, dental care, and mental health services needs. In my home State of Wyoming, we have a shortage of every type of provider, so I am glad this Committee is reauthorizing this important program. I am also

pleased to renew the Rural Health Care Services Outreach grant program, which increases access to primary health care services for rural Americans.”

The HELP Committee also approved the following nominations:

- Julie Fisher Cummings, of Michigan, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service;
- Mark D. Gearan, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service;
- Tom Osborne, of Nebraska, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service;
- Alan D. Solomont, of Massachusetts, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service;
- Donna N. Williams, of Texas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service; and,
- Charles E. F. Millard, of New York, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

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