



For Immediate Release

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**Monday, February 25, 2008**

***ENZI: SENATE VOTES TO MOVE FORWARD ON BILL TO RENEW,  
IMPROVE INDIAN HEALTH CARE SERVICES***

**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 the Senate has voted to move toward final passage of the “Indian Health Care Improvement Act,” S. 1200, a bill he said will “move the country forward in the right direction to improve Indian health care programs.”

“For too long, we have neglected our duty to review the Indian health care program and ensure that it continues to deliver high quality health care efficiently,” Enzi said. “This bill is a critical step to renew and reinvigorate Indian health care services.”

“Indians face significant health care challenges, including higher rates of infant mortality, suicide, and diseases like diabetes, and a shortage of mental health professionals,” Enzi said. “This bill will begin to improve health care quality by ensuring that Indians have access to the health care services they need.”

The Senate bill makes improvements to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which has not been updated in 15 years. The original Act expired in 2000 and has been renewed at inadequate funding levels every year since then.

Enzi said the bill improves health care services for American Indians, authorizes mental and behavioral health care, and promotes disease prevention and substance abuse addiction treatment as well as improved physical health for American Indians. The bill would also allow eligible American Indians to fully participate in Medicare and Medicaid.

“Times have changed and so has health care. This bill brings Native American health care, services, and access up to speed with the rest of the nation,” said Enzi, who voted in favor of the measure to move forward on the legislation.

Enzi said he is pleased that much of the bill being considered by the Senate includes provisions from the bipartisan bill he introduced in the last Congress with Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

“I’m glad that we are able to move forward on this legislation,” Enzi said. “I look forward to working with others to get this bill signed into law.”

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