



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI LEADS CHARGE
TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE FOR RURAL AMERICANS***

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today said Senate passage of the “Health Centers Renewal Act of 2008” will make it easier for patients to receive quality health care in rural and underserved areas – particularly in frontier communities that struggle to attract doctors and health care providers.

“Community health centers (CHCs) provide regular access to high quality health care for people in rural and underserved areas, regardless of their ability to pay,” Enzi said. “CHCs ensure that people can get the primary health care services they need, and cut down on costs for everyone by reducing the need for expensive emergency room care. This bill will renew and improve the CHC program to expand access to primary care services and improve overall care in underserved areas of the country.”

The bill, H.R. 1343, reauthorizes Community Health Center programs, Rural Health Care Services Outreach grant programs, and the National Health Service Corps.

“In Wyoming we have a shortage of every type of health care provider, which is why I have spent months working to ensure this bill will pass,” Enzi said. “This bill will help rural and frontier areas like Wyoming meet their health care needs. I urge the House of Representatives to take up this bill and pass it quickly, so we can send it to the President.

“These are critical programs that provide primary care, dental care, and mental health services in underserved areas across the United States. They help future doctors and nurses who agree to come to rural areas pay for their education.”

Enzi said that renewing Community Health Centers and rural health programs is an important piece of his comprehensive health care reform bill, “10 Steps to Transform Health Care in America,” S. 1783. Enzi helped bring together Members of Congress and stakeholders to reach the agreement that the Senate approved unanimously today.

“I have introduced a bill, 10 Steps to Transform Health Care in America, that would go a long way in making sure every American has a health insurance card in his or

her wallet,” Enzi said. “We could enact any one of these sensible proposals included in 10 Steps today and produce results tomorrow. Passing the Community Health Centers bill is a good start to expand access to quality care.

“I urge you to visit my website, enzi.senate.gov, to learn more about each of the 10 Steps.

“I sincerely appreciate the leadership of Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) on this Community Health Center bill. I want to thank Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), who championed provisions to reauthorize dental health workforce programs. I also want to thank Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR), John Barrasso (R-WY), and Pat Roberts (R-KS), for their hard work on the rural health clinics provisions.”

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