



# U.S. Senate



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## **Enzi & Hatch Push HHS for Analysis of Kennedy-Dodd Health Bill**

*Senators Ask HHS to Provide Technical Analysis of Health Care Legislation*

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senators Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and Member of the Finance Committee, and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Senior Member of HELP and Finance Committees, today said they were disappointed that Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), has failed to provide timely, written technical assistance on the Kennedy-Dodd bill. Enzi and Hatch again said that the HELP Committee needs official, technical feedback from HHS before it considers the bill.

“We have made a commitment to the people of this country to work in a bipartisan way to enact a health care reform bill this year that makes affordable, quality health insurance available for all Americans. In order for this to happen, members of Congress, those in the Administration and any interested stakeholders must put partisanship aside and work together,” the Senators wrote in a letter to Secretary Sebelius.

“Because this bill contains many pieces that will directly impact programs operated by your department, we felt it was critical to have a full analysis provided by those who will be charged with its implementation. Unfortunately, we have not received the requested technical assistance on the Affordable Health Choices Act from the Department of Health and Human Services.”

Under both Republican and Democratic Administrations, HHS has typically provided Senate committees with technical analysis of various legislative provisions that may conflict with ongoing HHS activities or have a broad impact on the public health.

A copy of the letter is below.

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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

June 16, 2009

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

It was with great disappointment that we received your letter dated June 15, 2009. In order to proceed with health care reform legislation that will have a fundamental impact on one-sixth of the economy and affect every American it is imperative that we, along with every member of Congress, have a full understanding of the pending legislation. In your letter you state that “the time to act is now” – we could not agree more. However, to address this critical national issue the right way, we need your immediate attention to our request for official technical assistance.

On June 10, 2009, we requested this assistance from your department on the Affordable Health Choices Act. Because this bill contains many pieces that will directly impact programs operated by your department, we felt it was critical to have a full analysis provided by those who will be charged with its implementation. Unfortunately, we have not received the requested technical assistance on the Affordable Health Choices Act from the Department of Health and Human Services.

Following your nomination to be the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services you appeared before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. At that hearing you were asked: “will you pledge to cooperate...by promptly responding to any written or phone inquiries, sharing information as soon as it becomes available, and directing your staff to do the same?” You answered: “Senator [Enzi], you have my commitment, if confirmed, that I will be not only an eager partner to work with Congress, but that I understand bipartisanship...”

Our disappointment has only grown, as we learned that the Majority staff of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee received technical assistance from your department while our request went unanswered.

Madam Secretary, we have made a commitment to the people of this country to work in a bipartisan way to enact a health care reform bill this year that makes affordable, quality health insurance available for all Americans. In order for this to happen, members of Congress, those in the administration and any interested stakeholders must put partisanship aside and work together.

We sincerely hope you will join our effort to move health care reform legislation forward and promptly respond to our request for official technical assistance on the Affordable Health Choices Act.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael B. Enzi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Michael B. Enzi, Ranking Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Orrin G. Hatch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Orrin G. Hatch