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NAPH Commends Senator Baucus' Efforts to Advance Health Reform
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September 17, 2009

Senator Max Baucus, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, has taken an important step toward comprehensive health reform with his release of an outline of his proposed legislation, *America's Health Future Act of 2009*.

NAPH represents America's leading safety net hospitals – those hospitals and systems that maintain an open door for all patients, regardless of their ability to pay. America's safety net hospitals know how important meaningful health care reform will be to the uninsured and underinsured, and to the entire nation. Millions of families in our country are just one major illness, injury or lost job from financial ruin due to health care costs. Our emergency rooms are crowded with patients who have nowhere else to turn. Too many people defer needed health care when they cannot afford it. NAPH strongly encourages the Senate Finance Committee and other Congressional leaders to move forward to enact health care reform now.

NAPH strongly supports the broad thrust of Chairman Baucus' outlined proposal. Like other stakeholders we look forward to working closely with the Finance Committee and the Congressional leadership on details that are of direct concern to NAPH members and the patients and communities they serve. Those concerns include the level and timing of proposed reductions in Medicare and Medicaid "disproportionate share hospital" (or "DSH") payments. DSH payments are presently targeted to address funding gaps due to Medicaid payment shortfalls and provide support for community-wide health services, as well as to care for the uninsured and underinsured. NAPH members know that a strong safety net infrastructure will continue to be essential in a reformed system, ensuring that the 25 million individuals who will remain uninsured and 11 million new Medicaid enrollees can access needed care.

NAPH and its members also plan to work with the Finance Committee to expand on health care delivery system reforms in the Chairman's proposal (and in other reform bills) that will permit the nation to take advantage of the extraordinary innovations that are already being implemented by safety net hospitals around the country. These include innovations that both enhance quality and improve efficiency, such as the development of fully integrated delivery systems, community-oriented outpatient and primary care, chronic disease management, health information technology and major managed care initiatives specifically tailored to low income individuals and families (and other vulnerable patient populations).