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GOP Senators Up for 2008 Reelect Lead Charge Against Administration Medicare Cuts

Coleman, Sununu, Collins, Wicker, Dole & 41 Other U.S. Senators Urge Cancellation of Regulation Cutting \$770 Million in FY 2009

Washington, DC -- Signaling the significant stakes involved in terms of protecting seniors' ongoing care needs as the Administration prepares to implement a new Medicare regulation cutting \$770 million in FY 2009, forty-seven U.S. Senators - including those GOP lawmakers facing the most competitive electoral challenges - have weighed-in with the White House urging the Administration to stop the regulation from going into effect in the coming days.

"Late last week, Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) sent a letter to the White House, making him the 47th U.S. Senator to weigh-in on this critical health policy issue in the past four weeks. The fact that lawmakers with the most challenging reelections are imploring the Administration to forego this hurtful Medicare regulation underscores the significance of this robust opposition," observed Bruce Yarwood, President and CEO of the American Health Care Association (AHCA).

Alan G. Rosenbloom, President of the Alliance for Quality Nursing Home Care, said the strong opposition to the Medicare regulation is based upon the stark fact local seniors' health care needs will be compromised by a regulation that will have a significantly negative impact on lawmakers' elderly constituents. "The scope and breadth of this congressional opposition - particularly among key members of the President's own party - is striking, and demonstrates they have objectively evaluated the facts, and how these cuts will undermine the care needs of their elderly constituents," said Rosenbloom.

The AHCA and Alliance leaders explained that today's existing Medicare policy - which will be significantly altered by the new regulation - was designed to encourage the movement of certain high-acuity Medicare beneficiaries to skilled nursing facilities (SNFs). As a result, the site of care for a significant number of high acuity patients appropriately shifted to SNFs, and a recent independent analysis shows this shift saved the Medicare program an estimated \$709 million." (Source: Avalere Health, LLC)

The GOP Senators who have either signed or sent letters to Health & Human Services (HHS) Secretary Mike Leavitt or White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten are Senators Coleman, Roberts, Dole, Collins, Burr, Chambliss, Sununu, Snowe, Crapo, Isakson, Specter, Alexander, Warner, Wicker, and Cochran. The Democratic Senators expressing their opposition are: Conrad, Wyden, Stabenow, Lincoln, Akaka, Cardin, Murray, Mikulski, Dorgan, Casey, Leahy, Cantwell, Ben Nelson, Levin, Menendez, Salazar, Inouye, Klobuchar, Pryor Dodd, Whitehouse, Lautenberg, Reed, Johnson, Webb, Harkin and Rockefeller. Independents Joe Lieberman and Bernard Sanders are also on record as opposing the Medicare cuts.

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