



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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BAUCUS COMMENTS ON AMENDMENT #348; EQUALITY FOR MEDICARE FEE-FOR-SERVICE BENEFICIARIES

Today, I offered a very simple amendment to the budget resolution. It clarified that seniors who choose to remain in traditional Medicare, which serves 89 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries, should have access to the same drug benefit level as those who enroll in private plans.

This is a rural issue. Managed care plans and PPOs have not flourished in rural areas. In fact, they're non-existent in many states, including Montana.

It's also a fairness issue. Medicare should not discriminate between seniors who enroll in private plans and those who choose to remain in traditional Medicare. Last year, 90 of the senators present today voted in support of this principle.

I am disappointed that my amendment was narrowly defeated this morning. But I will continue to work hard to ensure that all seniors -- rural and urban, those enrolled in private plans and those remaining in traditional Medicare -- have access to the same level of drug benefits. It's only fair.