



For Immediate Release
May 8, 2008

Contact: Erin Shields
(202) 224-4515

**BAUCUS APPLAUDS MAJOR STEP TOWARD PROTECTING
SENIORS FROM UNSCRUPULOUS MEDICARE MARKETING
BY PRIVATE INSURERS**

Finance Chairman wants seniors to be protected in law

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today applauded new regulations issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to ban aggressive marketing practices by private Medicare plans, and added that many of these protections are so important that they need to be codified in law. Baucus has been a leader in the effort to end unscrupulous marketing practices that snare seniors into unwanted or unneeded private Medicare plans.

“I’m pleased CMS proposes to clamp down on abusive marketing practices that never should have been allowed in the first place,” said Baucus. **“America’s seniors have been pressured, prodded, preyed on, and ripped off by shady marketing too often. I intend to get these bans into the law to insure aggressive marketing tactics are quashed once and for all.”**

The CMS regulations banned completely cold calling and door-to-door marketing by agents of private Medicare plans. It also prohibits plans from offering seniors free meals and requires plans to increase training for agents. Baucus expressed strong support for these provisions, and said he intends to strengthen these policies by writing them into federal law.

Baucus held two hearings on harmful Medicare marketing practices in the Finance Committee in February of this year. He heard from seniors and advocates affected by aggressive marketing payments. He also questioned a senior executive from the Humana Insurance company and the acting administrator of CMS about what steps are being taken to protect seniors. In March, Baucus secured support from the Association of Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) on a number of proposals for legally banning unscrupulous marketing by plan agents on the ground. Baucus said at that meeting he expects the group to work with the Committee to ban predatory marketing tactics outright.

###