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Harkin, Enzi Introduce Measure to Improve Quality of Medical Radiation and Imaging Services

Washington, D.C. –Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) introduced legislation today to establish minimum education and credentialing standards for personnel who plan and deliver radiation therapy treatments and medical imaging services. The Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility and Excellence (CARE) in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act is also cosponsored by Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Al Franken (D-MN).

“Each year, more than 300 million radiation therapy treatments and imaging exams like x-rays and MRIs are performed in the United States and unfortunately, many of these procedures are performed by personnel who are not adequately trained or credentialed,” **said Harkin**. “This bill will reduce the risk of medical errors associated with misdiagnosis or inappropriate exposure to medical radiation, and save millions of health care dollars by decreasing the number of examinations that must be repeated due to poor quality.”

“For millions of Americans, the road to diagnosis, treatment, and healing begins in the radiology department,” **Enzi said**. “The CARE bill will require national education standards for the professionals that perform medical imaging and radiation therapy to ensure that they are properly trained. This bill is vital to improving patient safety and health care quality.”

Currently, not all states license or certify medical imaging personnel. And among those states that do license or certify, the laws vary widely in effectiveness. In more than a dozen states and the District of Columbia, individuals are allowed to perform medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures following only a few weeks of on-the-job training.

Specifically, The CARE bill would:

- Direct the Secretary of HHS to work with medical imaging and radiation therapy professionals to develop, regulations establishing minimum education and credentialing standards;
- Establish a grandfathering process for current radiation therapy and imaging personnel who do not meet education or credentialing standards. Existing practitioners will be able to count their work experience toward their certification requirements;
- Recognize the unique challenges of delivering care in rural and underserved areas in order to maintain access to medical imaging and radiation therapy in those communities.

The CARE bill enjoys the broad support of medical imaging professionals, radiation therapy professionals, medical imaging and radiation therapy equipment manufacturers, patient groups and physicians.

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