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Harkin Announces Series of Hearings on Health Reform Benefits

First Hearing Will Examine Protections Against Insurance Company Abuses

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) announced today that the Committee will hold a series of hearings in the coming months to examine how the health reform law benefits Americans. The hearings will explore implementation of several provisions of the *Affordable Care Act* and will feature testimony from Americans directly affected by the Act’s provisions.

“Millions of Americans are already benefiting from protections in the health reform law, and millions more will see benefits in the coming months and years – both in terms of their health and their economic well-being,” said Harkin. “While the Congressional Republicans seem dead-set on reopening old arguments, Democrats are focused on swiftly and efficiently implementing health reform so that its advantages will be enjoyed by all Americans. Through these hearings, the Committee will examine those implementation efforts, hear from those who have benefited directly from the law’s provisions, and learn about best practices going forward.”

The Committee’s first hearing in the series will be held on **January 27** to examine how the law protects consumers against insurance industry abuses, such as the denial of coverage to Americans with preexisting conditions. The hearing, entitled “*The Affordable Care Act: Freeing Americans from Insurance Company Abuses*,” will be the Committee’s first hearing in the 112th Congress. Additional details and the list of witnesses will be announced in the coming days.

Over the course of the series, the Committee will examine a variety of topics, including how the *Affordable Care Act*:

- Protects consumers against insurance industry abuses
- Holds insurers accountable for how they set insurance rates and spend consumers’ premium dollars
- Benefits small business owners
- Reduces the deficit and promotes economic growth
- Increases quality of care and reduces waste, fraud and abuse in the health care system
- Makes unprecedented investments in prevention and wellness

- Frees Americans to change jobs without fear of losing their health insurance

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- Expands coverage to millions of Americans

All hearings will be webcast live at: <http://help.senate.gov>

Testimony and archived videos will be posted at: <http://help.senate.gov/hearings/>