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## **HATCH: ESSENTIAL HEALTH BENEFITS WILL CAUSE PREMIUMS TO RISE, RESTRICT CHOICES**

*Utah Senator Says, "The framework proposed by the Administration takes away the right of individuals to choose the health care plan that best fits their needs."*

WASHINGTON – Today, the Obama Administration issued preliminary guidance on essential health benefits (EHB), federally-mandated benefit requirements under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) for all insurance purchased in the small group and individual market. In response, U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, said he will carefully scrutinize the implementation of these Washington mandates and believes they will cause the cost of health insurance to rise.

"There is no question essential health benefits will increase the cost of insurance for almost every American," said Hatch. "The framework proposed by the Administration takes away the right of individuals to choose the health care plan that best fits their needs. Unfortunately, the partisan health care law is bending the health care cost curve in the wrong direction with more mandates, regulation, and price controls. I will carefully scrutinize this process as it moves forward."

Today, HHS announced its preliminary guidance for the essential health benefits package which requires small group and individual health plans to cover specified services. Under PPACA, these benefit packages must include 10 specific coverage mandates, including emergency services, prescription drugs, and maternity care, among others.

President Obama pledged that the health law would lower health costs by \$2,500 for families. However, according to a variety of sources, health insurance premiums continue to rise, outstripping inflation. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, for example, has found the President's health care law will increase premiums by \$2,100 for families purchasing coverage on their own. Hatch believes that the EHB's insurance coverage mandates would further increase already dramatically increasing premiums.

The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over a large portion of the President's health law.

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