



For Immediate Release

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***ENZI MARKS WORLD AIDS DAY; URGES ACTION TO HALT SPREAD OF DISEASE AND EXPAND ACCESS TO CARE***

**Washington, D.C.** – Marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “World AIDS Day,” U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), Ranking Member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, today said that the United States has made great strides combating AIDS at home and across the world, and must continue to lead the way to treat, prevent, and find a cure for the terrible disease.

“Over 40 million people in the world are living with HIV/AIDS, and millions more are infected each year,” Enzi said. “Though we have taken steps to combat the disease, we must continue to fight this global epidemic on a number of fronts with every nation as a partner. Early and consistent treatment, promotion of testing, education and prevention campaigns, and cutting-edge research are critical to fighting HIV/AIDS.”

Enzi expressed hope that World AIDS Day will serve as a reminder to people across the globe of the importance of getting tested for HIV and knowing one’s status, saying, “Making an HIV test part of a routine physical exam is an important step toward improving treatment of HIV/AIDS patients and stopping the spread of the disease. By identifying HIV-positive individuals sooner, doctors can provide patients with better access to life-saving and life-extending care.”

“For so long, we could only treat the symptoms of AIDS and provide comfort to the dying. Today, we have the ability to fight back against HIV itself. We have medicines that can effectively halt the evolution of HIV and help people live normal lives.”

Enzi said that Congress must focus on renewing and improving the Ryan White Care Act, which provides care and treatment for individuals with HIV and AIDS in the United States.

“This year I will be working to reauthorize the Ryan White program and build on the good work it does throughout the United States,” Enzi said. “For the past 18 years, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program has helped us to reach hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom had never had access to health care before. Thanks to the

presence of the support network it helps to provide, those living with AIDS have been able to lead happier, healthier and more productive and active lives.

“In the years to come, the Ryan White program will focus on providing more widespread testing, and increasing efforts to educate adolescents and those in high risk areas about AIDS and how to prevent it. It will also make it possible to get individuals into care as soon as possible.”

Enzi also noted the work that the United States is doing to fight AIDS around the world. Through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which Congress reauthorized last year, the United States and its partners have provided care to more than 6.6 million people in Africa, including 2.7 million orphans and vulnerable children, and counseled millions more on the importance of prevention.

The first World AIDS Day was held on December 1, 1988.

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