



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Reporters and Editors
RE: Nursing Home Smoke Detectors
DA: Thursday, March 24, 2005

Sen. Chuck Grassley issued the following comment about today's announcement by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that nursing homes that don't have sprinkler systems or hard-wired smoke detectors will have to install battery operated ones in patient rooms and public areas. In 2003, Sen. Grassley requested an analysis by and recommendations from the Government Accountability Office on fire safety standards in nursing homes following deadly nursing home fires in Connecticut and Tennessee.

Today Sen. Grassley serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, which is responsible for Medicaid and Medicare. He previously served as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Aging, where he exposed led an substantial effort to improve the quality of care in the nation's nursing homes.

Grassley comment:

"It was surprising to learn that some of the most basic fire safety measures we'd expect to find in any roadside motel were not required for nursing homes, despite the vulnerable condition of so many nursing home residents. With today's announcement, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has made good use of its authority by establishing a new standard to protect nursing home residents."