



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: Today's Medicare trustees' report
Da: Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, made the following comment on today's Medicare trustees' report.

“The trustees’ report recognizes that health care costs are rising. That’s no surprise to anyone. Since Medicare beneficiaries deserve a better program, we took a major step forward with our legislation last year. We improved payments to rural health providers and added a prescription drug benefit to keep the program strong for this generation and generations to come. We put a heavy emphasis on preventive health care. That’s much better for Medicare beneficiaries and also costs much less than treating illnesses that went undetected.

“We also added new fiscal safeguards to provide a better picture of Medicare’s financial health and trigger action by the President and Congress to keep the program strong in the long-term. As the economy grows, more workers are contributing to the Medicare program and ensuring its availability. We need to continue building on the successes of the greatest improvements to Medicare in its history by making sure the government implements the law as Congress intended. Congress’ job isn’t over now that we’ve passed the legislation. We have to be ready to fix anything that doesn’t work best for older Americans.”