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Grassley Announces Roundtable on Staff Discussion Draft on Non-profit Hospitals

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, today announced a roundtable to discuss the committee minority staff discussion draft of potential reforms involving non-profit hospitals. The roundtable will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 30, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The roundtable will be open to the press and the public. Grassley will make brief remarks. The list of participants is set. Participants will include representatives from the government, hospitals, hospital associations, public charities that advocate on behalf of the poor, and academics. The participants will discuss issues in the implementation of proposals of the staff discussion draft, as well as questions raised in the staff discussion draft. Participants will make five-minute presentations and then discuss the issues and questions.

“This roundtable will provide a useful forum to allow give and take to discuss important questions such as charity care, community benefit, and billing and collection practices,” Grassley said. “Charitable hospitals benefit from very significant tax breaks. It’s important to understand what they’re doing to help those in need to justify such beneficial treatment under the tax laws. I haven’t made any decisions about whether legislation is necessary to address the issues we’ve seen regarding non-profit hospitals, but this is an important discussion to help me decide whether to pursue legislation.

“This roundtable comes at a critical crossroads for non-profit hospitals. The proposed Form 990 H gives the non-profit hospitals an opportunity to make a clear case to the public of what they are doing that supports the tax breaks they receive. Unfortunately, a few hospitals are trying to undermine the new Schedule H by adding confusing, misleading data such as bad debt and Medicare ‘under-payments’ to the definition of community benefit. That effort raises very real questions for me about whether the revised form alone is enough to ensure that all non-profit hospitals are committed to public service in exchange for their generous tax breaks.”

The Finance Committee minority staff discussion draft is available at <http://finance.senate.gov/press/Gpress/2007/prg071907a.pdf>