

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON HEALTH CARE REFORM  
LESSONS LEARNED FROM INDIVIDUAL STATE EXPERIENCES**

*United States Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Hearing*

*As Prepared for Delivery*

I welcome my colleagues to today's important roundtable on health care. Our topic today is to learn from the states. I particularly commend Senator Bingaman for his able leadership. And it's a privilege to be with our Ranking Member Senator Enzi.

I have been part of the nation's health debate for the past forty years. Along the way, we have had some important successes. We passed Medicare, Medicaid and the CHIP program. But we have also had our share of failures.

Too many times, we have fallen short. We have not reached our goal of health care for all. Health reform continues to be the cause of my life. It is my number one priority in the United States Senate. So many on this committee and around the country are working tirelessly to reach our goal.

And this time we will not fail.

I believe more than ever before that this is the time, this is the year that we will pass quality and affordable health care for every American.

We have a long way to go. And I don't pretend to have all the answers. So part of this process is to listen and learn. We want to hear from those who have worked tirelessly to improve health care. That is why we are here today. Often, we turn to the states for ideas.

In my own state of Massachusetts, we have a health plan that calls for shared responsibility by government by business and by individuals.

Massachusetts now has the lowest percentage of uninsured in the country. Many other states are trying new ways to improve health care.

We look forward today to learning more about what they are doing. So I thank our witnesses.

I am especially grateful to Jon Kingsdale and Eileen McAnney for joining us today from Massachusetts. I look forward to our discussion.

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