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**FASA APPLAUDS SENATOR CRAPO FOR LEADERSHIP
IN ASC PAYMENT REFORM**

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (OCTOBER 29, 2007) – FASA, the national association representing ambulatory surgery centers (ASC), is commending Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) for his leadership in impacting change to expand Medicare beneficiary access to critical surgical services. On October 26, 2007, Senator Crapo introduced the Ambulatory Surgical Center Medicare Payment Modernization Act of 2007 (S. 2250) into the US Senate. If enacted, this legislation would improve the ASC payment system and the mechanism that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) uses to determine what procedures Medicare reimburses ASCs for providing.

Similar to H.R. 1823, which was introduced in the US House of Representatives earlier this year by Representatives Kendrick Meek (D-FL) and Wally Herger (R-CA), this legislation links ASC payments to the payment system of hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs) in an ongoing manner and would require the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to pay ASCs 75% of the HOPD rate. This is in contrast to the Medicare ASC payment reform CMS finalized earlier this year that results in payments to ASCs of 65% of the HOPD rate and, due to different annual updates for ASCs and HOPDs, will result in rates in both settings that will continue to diverge over time.

Provisions in the new bill are patterned after the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission's recommendation that ASCs should be authorized to perform and receive Medicare facility payments for any surgical service, except for those procedures where (1) the Department of Health and Human Services secretary identifies a specific risk concerning a certain procedure being performed in an ambulatory surgical setting or (2) an overnight stay is required. In contrast to the final Medicare reforms, the legislation does not use a number of arbitrary criteria to determine what procedures are excluded.

Senator Crapo explained the introduction of legislation saying, "Ambulatory surgical centers provide patients with a high-quality, convenient and less expensive option for their outpatient surgery. This bill will allow ASCs to provide more services, encourage competition to improve quality of care and generate savings for Medicare and its beneficiaries. I look forward to working with ASC owners and employees across the country to enact this important piece of legislation."

FASA President Kathy Bryant expressed appreciation for Senator Crapo's efforts saying, "In addition to the work he has done in the Senate, Senator Crapo has made tremendous efforts at the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries and others have access to ASC services. Senator Crapo has a long-standing commitment to competition and patient choice in health care."

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FASA, the nation's leading association of ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), is a national, nonprofit association representing the interests of those who own, operate and seek the services of ASCs throughout the nation. The organization represents more than 2,200 ASCs, the professionals who provide care and services in such ASCs and the patients who seek care there. Visit FASA online at www.fasa.org.