



## **Continua Recognizes New Mexico Senator for Rural TECH Act**

*Senator Tom Udall's Bill Focuses on Telehealth Projects Designed to Enhance Patient Outcomes While Reducing Health Care Costs*

**BEAVERTON, Ore. – December 2, 2009** – Continua Health Alliance commends Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) for the introduction of the Rural TECH (Telemedicine Enhancing Community Health) Act of 2009 (S. 2741). “This bill would create an important expansion of telehealth coverage for Medicare beneficiaries everywhere recovering from stroke. Additionally, telehealth will become a new tool to reach the patients of rural community health centers and Indian Health Services (IHS) facilities,” said Charles Parker, Executive Director, Continua Health Alliance. “We hope the Senate will include these provisions as they consider the health reform bill.”

For Medicare patients of community health centers and IHS facilities, this bill would overcome two big Medicare barriers to telehealth. The barrier for the most common form of telehealth, video conferencing, is restricted to people who live in rural counties, which omits 34 million disabled and elderly people. Another form, “store and forward,” used primarily for consultations with specialists about medical images would be added to the currently approved Federal demonstrations sites in Alaska and Hawaii.

The bill also calls for pilot projects to use telehealth technology to advance behavioral health, assist health care workers in rural areas in providing enhanced access to health care for their patients and facilitate stroke rehabilitation.

“The additional provisions for telehealth to the Senate health care reform efforts are welcomed. These new modes of care will expand access for those patients who are most in need, while empowering patients to live independently and take a role in their own care from the comfort and convenience of their homes,” explained Parker. “This legislation will help position the United States to compete in the world market of health care solutions that address the problems of aging, chronic disease and physical impairments through the provisioning of telehealth services.”

### **About Continua**

Continua Health Alliance is a non-profit, open industry coalition of the finest health care and technology companies joining together in collaboration to improve the quality of personal health care. With more than 220 member companies around the world, Continua is dedicated to establishing a system of interoperable personal health solutions with the knowledge that extending those solutions into the home fosters independence, empowers individuals and provides the opportunity for truly personalized health and wellness management.

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