Contact: Maria Reppas, (202) 225-6631 / (202) 527-0149 maria.reppas@mail.house.gov

Domestic Violence and Health Insurance

Washington, DC - Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) made the following statement today at the House Budget Committee's markup on health care reform legislation.

"Rising health care costs and inadequate coverage burden many Americans. The current system lets insurance companies penalize a woman, just for being a woman.

"It is unfair and it is wrong, plain and simple, that a woman can be charged a higher premium than a man or be denied coverage for a "pre-existing condition" such as pregnancy, having a c-section, or being a domestic violence victim.

"An estimated 1.3 million women are victims of physical assault by an intimate partner each year, and 85% of domestic violence victims are women.

"Let me give you one example.

"In 2006, attorney Jody Neal-Post tried to get health insurance but was rejected because of treatment .... she received following a domestic-abuse incident. Her insurer told her that her medical history made her a high risk, more likely to end up in the emergency room or require additional care.

"We can do more to ensure that the one in every four women who experience domestic violence will not be afraid to get the care they need for fear that an insurance company will

dump them when they need care.

"I urge my colleagues to support this motion to prohibit the denial of coverage to women-to our daughters, mothers, and grandmothers who need health reform now."