



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Legislation Providing Malpractice Coverage for Free Health Care Clinics Becomes Law**

BURLINGTON, VT (March 30, 2010) – Included in the historic health care reform bill recently signed into law by President Obama is legislation introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), which extends Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) malpractice insurance coverage for free clinics. The new legislation extends coverage to free clinic board members and officers, employees and contractors. Previously, the law only provided coverage for medical professionals who volunteered in free clinics. The new scope of coverage parallels what is currently available to federally funded community health centers.

Free clinics will no longer have to spend thousands of dollars annually to purchase malpractice coverage. “These are funds that could be directed to providing necessary care to the uninsured.” said Leahy. “This is especially true in states like Vermont, where free clinics make a significant impact serving those in rural areas.”

This legislation will benefit the 78 Volunteers in Medicine clinics, as well as all free clinics across the country that provide essential care to hundreds of thousands of uninsured. “For many uninsured living in this country, free clinics are a critical part of a community’s safety net, and will continue to be so for many years to come.” stated Amy R. Hamlin, Executive Director of Volunteers in Medicine, the only national nonprofit committed to developing a network of free clinics for the uninsured. “As a result of this legislation, free clinics will be able to increase their capacity to provide much needed health care services to America’s uninsured.”

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For more information on Volunteers in Medicine, please visit [www.volunteersinmedicine.org](http://www.volunteersinmedicine.org). Currently, there are 78 clinics in 25 states with an additional 40 clinics under development.

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