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## ***Health Reform Update from Washington, September 2009***

Dear Friends,

As Congress continues to debate health reform, I am traveling around Ohio, hearing directly from many of you, about your concerns with our health care system. Everywhere I go, I hear about small business owners struggling to afford coverage for their employees. I hear from parents worried about their children, just out of college, unable to afford health insurance. I hear from Ohians who can't get coverage at any price because of a pre-existing condition.

And I hear from Ohioans who are worried about the impact of health reform on the insurance they have now. One thing is clear - we must keep what works and fix what is broken. We must protect health coverage for those who like what they have, and we must ensure those with no coverage have insurance options they can afford.

### **What it Means for You: Lower costs, More Choices, and Coverage You Can Count On**

Last week, I hosted a [health reform forum in Cleveland](#). Hundreds of Ohioans participated in the event at the John Hay High School Auditorium. We heard from Jared, who shared with us concerns about his son's ability to afford health care coverage. Jared said he worries about how his son - who attends college, works part time, and has no insurance - will be able to pay for his medical bills.

Health reform means affordable coverage for young Ohioans like Jared's son and longer periods for these young people to stay on their parents' plan while they finish school and start a career.

Health reform would help small business owners like Terry from Columbus offer their employees private health coverage. Terry participated in a recent [forum in Columbus](#) where we discussed the tax credits that small businesses would receive to help pay for employee health coverage.

Health reform would also benefit seniors like Jane and her husband, who participated in another forum in [Cambridge](#).

### What We Can Do

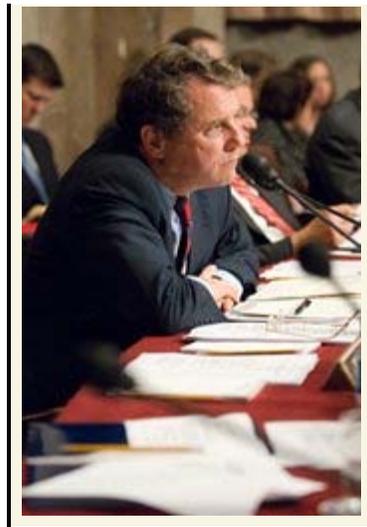
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[Ohio](#). We talked about how reform would strengthen Medicare by cutting in half the so-called “donut hole” in prescription drug coverage and eliminating cost-sharing for preventive benefits like mammograms and colonoscopies.



Robert from Columbus, and his wife and teenage son, would benefit from health reform’s strong consumer protections that would bar pre-existing condition exclusions. Robert recently emailed me to describe how after losing his job last year, he and his son were able to pick up private insurance. His wife, however, was denied because several years ago she was diagnosed with mild and treatable high blood pressure. Robert’s wife had only one office visit and one drug prescription a couple of years ago, but was turned down for the

insurance she needs today.

For Ohioans without health insurance, reform would drive private insurance premiums down and establish new insurance options for areas where affordable private coverage isn’t available.

### **Middle Class Ohioans and the Health Care Crisis**

At the [Center for Working Class Studies at Youngstown State University](#) earlier this month, I spoke with hundreds of Ohioans about the rising costs of health care straining family budgets and undermining the stability of the middle class.

We talked about how if we do nothing, middle class families across Ohio will continue to see more of their income and savings pay for unchecked premiums and out-of-pocket costs.

If we don’t act now, our health care system will need to focus more on emergency care and less on preventive care in order to accommodate the urgent health care needs of the uninsured. The right thing to do – and the smart thing to do – is to expand our insurance system to make sure every Americans gets the health care they need, when they need it.



### **Help Pass Health Reform that Works for You**

During his speech before a joint session of Congress earlier this month, President Obama said: *“I understand how difficult this health care debate has been. I know that many in this country are deeply skeptical that government is looking out for them. I understand that the politically safe move would be to kick the can further down the road – to defer reform one*

*more year, or one more election, or one more term...but that's not what the moment calls for."*

This moment calls for action. We must close the gaps in health insurance and stabilize the costs of health care before things get worse. We are an entrepreneurial nation. We take bold ideas and run with them. Health reform is the bold idea that working together, the private and public sectors can make our health care system better for all Americans. The time to do that is now.

Over the last few months on the Senate floor, I've read letters from Ohioans whose stories affirm the need for health reform. [President Obama and I](#) heard more of these stories in Cincinnati, while visiting workers and their families during the nation's largest Labor Day picnic.

I've heard from thousands of Ohioans who need reform now – I receive letters from them every day, and I heard from hundreds of them during an [e-Town Hall](#) I held earlier this month.

Please continue visiting my website to learn how health reform will benefit you. By [sharing your story](#), you will give voice to the urgent need for change. Our nation sets the standard for freedom, opportunity, and prosperity. It's up to you and me to ensure that our health care system sets the global standard for efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusiveness.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. Please don't hesitate to send it along to a friend or family member or to contact me with your comments, concerns, or questions by visiting [www.brown.senate.gov](http://www.brown.senate.gov).

Sincerely,

Sherrod Brown



**:: Please do not reply to this email. Visit my website to contact me ::**

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