

“Health  
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*for every*  
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— CONGRESSMAN  
**JOE SESTAK**

# AN Update ON HEALTH CARE

CONGRESSMAN JOE SESTAK



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## Congressman Joe Sestak — *Working for affordable, accessible and quality health care for all*

Since his first day in Congress, Joe has made health care a top priority to ensure better health care for children, seniors, working families and businesses, and veterans.

### First, Joe joined key Congressional committees on health care:

- Workforce Subcommittee on Health
- Small Business Subcommittee on Health Care

### Then he held key health care events:

- Summit on Mental Health Parity with special guest Congressman Patrick Kennedy, Mental Health Caucus
- Summit on Affordable, Accessible and Quality Health Care
- Summit on Veterans' Health Care
- Roundtables/Gatherings on Breast Cancer, Stem Cell research, Autism, Juvenile Diabetes, among others

## The Results:

### Our Children...

**Fought for all children to have health insurance in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Act** that would ensure:

- 4 million more uninsured children to have health care in addition to the 6.6 million already enrolled
- Mental health care is treated equally with physical health care
- Comprehensive coverage of dental care
- “Premium assistance subsidies” are provided to keep children in private health insurance coverage
- Pregnant women are given coverage

### Co-sponsored:

- **The Conquering Childhood Cancer Act**  
Authorizes \$30 million annually for childhood cancer research
- **The Spinal Muscular Atrophy Treatment Act for SMA Research**
- **The Child Nutrition Promotion and Lunch Protection Act**  
Combats childhood obesity by providing more nutritious food in school
- **The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act**  
Gives the FDA authority to regulate tobacco products and marketing, especially to children

### Worked for:

- **\$120 million (18% increase) in the Healthy Start Program for Children**

Congressman Joe Sestak

Dear Friend,

I came to Congress foremost because of my deep concern for the quality of America's health care.

We have so much potential – with great doctors, facilities, and hospitals across the nation. But there remains real dysfunction in our nation's ability to deliver quality health care to all people – particularly to those who often need it the most: seniors, children, working families, and veterans.

I have always said that health care is a key pillar of our national security, and that our national security begins at home with the health security of our people. Healthy citizens mean a more productive economy.

There are 47 million uninsured and 16 million underinsured Americans. In Pennsylvania, we have serious health care challenges. The state has the 2nd highest percentage of elderly of any state in the nation, ranking 5th in new cases of cancer with 46,000 residents dying of heart disease last year. We owe our people better health security.

This newsletter highlights the health care initiatives I have been working on – from funding the Children's Health Insurance Program and combating childhood cancer to funding the CHAMP program for seniors and research to cure diseases. If you have questions, I hope you will feel free to call my office (the number is listed on the back page).

Sincerely,



**CONGRESSMAN JOE SESTAK**





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### Our Seniors...

Fought for seniors to have better and preventive health care in the "CHAMP" act that:

- Eliminates co-payments and deductibles for preventive services, including free screening tests for glaucoma, initial preventive physical exams, prostate and colorectal cancer, mammograms and diabetes screening, bone mass measurement, and others
- Reduces co-payment for mental health services to ensure parity with other health care services
- Stops doctors from leaving Medicare by reversing the 10% decrease in physician reimbursement with a .5% increase over the next two years
- Allows seniors to change their Medicare D drug plan if the drugs provided by their pharmaceutical plan changes during the year (cannot do so today)
- Eliminates financial penalty for seniors who enroll late in Medicare D

### Sponsored key bills on behalf of seniors, including:

- The "Elder Justice Act" to prevent and prosecute abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly
- The "Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act" to lower senior drug costs by requiring the U.S. government to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices (cannot do so today)

### Worked for:

- The FDA Amendments Act to ensure greater drug safety by more stringent safety requirements

### Our Veterans...

Fought to ensure our active and retired military men and women are getting the medical attention they need:



Congressman Sestak speaking about veterans' issues at the Glenolden Memorial Day Service.

- \$4.4 billion increase over last year in veterans medical care
- \$2.9 billion for mental health and substance abuse
  - \$600 million for new initiatives for mental health and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), including 8 treatment centers
- Extended from two to five years following discharge the eligibility period to receive medical care by the Veterans Administration
- \$450 million for traumatic brain injury care and research
- Prohibited increases in military and retiree health care and pharmacy user fees

### Our Working Families and Small Businesses...

Supported legislation to improve access to health care in the workplace, including:

- Extending COBRA health coverage for older displaced workers until they find new employment or become eligible to enroll in Medicare
- Originating legislation to provide grants to help small businesses provide affordable health coverage for their employees
- Providing a health care tax credit for 85% of costs for workers' families displaced by trade actions
- Helping family health care by:
  - 10% increase in funding for Community Health Centers and \$75 million increase for State Health Access grants
  - \$50 million for medically high-risk people who are unable to obtain health insurance
- Increasing breast cancer treatment to \$650 million (9% increase) with minimum two day stay after operation
- Co-sponsoring bill for parity in treatment of mental health
- Co-sponsoring Diabetes Care Act to better care for diabetes patients


### ...And Research to Cure Diseases.

Worked to increase research funding for cures and treatments of diseases, including:

- \$29.4 billion (a \$750 million increase) for Fiscal Year 2008 for the National Institutes of Health for 550 new research grants
  - \$6.5 billion for the Center for Disease Control to combat chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, among others
  - \$906 million for mental health and \$2.2 billion for substance abuse
  - \$1.1 billion to protect against a potential influenza pandemic



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*Congressman Sestak talking with constituents at the Chester County Hospital May Fair about health care issues.*

*“It was once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.”*

*— Senator Hubert Humphrey*

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