Promoting Access to Healthcare

Ensuring access to quality, affordable health care is a top priority for Senator Casey. Senator Casey is a member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and the Committee on Finance, both of which oversee policies and programs related to healthcare access. Senator Casey is using his positions on these committees to protect Medicare, expand and protect healthcare access for all Pennsylvanians and promote lifesaving biomedical research.

Protecting Medicare

- Senator Casey cosponsored the **Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries Act of 2015**, which would prevent increases to Part B premiums and deductibles for all Medicare beneficiaries.
- Senator Casey helped pass the **Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015** that repealed the sustainable growth rate (SGR) and put in place a new payment system for physicians under Medicare that focuses on the quality of care provided rather than the quantity of care.
- Senator Casey has consistently supported lifting the arbitrary caps on physical and occupational therapy and speech language pathology for Medicare beneficiaries, ensuring beneficiaries have access to these vital services, and was pleased to see this achieved under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Beneficiary Enrollment Notification and Eligibility Simplification (BENES) Act**, which would address the often confusing and opaque Medicare enrollment process, by requiring the federal government to notify individuals approaching eligibility with relevant information and steps to take to ensure proper enrollment.

Expanding and Protecting Healthcare Access

- Senator Casey has long been an advocate of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). He was a strong supporter of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009. He worked to ensure CHIP would be maintained and strengthened during the debate on healthcare reform; and he strongly supported extending funding for CHIP in 2015 and 2018.
- Senator Casey is strongly opposed to block granting or capping funding for the Medicaid program and has vehemently fought against Republican efforts to end Medicaid as we know it. Over the past two years, Senator Casey has:
  - Led the opposition to Republicans plans to decimate the Medicaid program by repealing the expansion and transforming the program into a per-capita cap/block grant.
  - Held multiple press calls and events in Washington DC and across Pennsylvania highlighting how the various Republican plans to decimate Medicaid would hurt seniors, people with disabilities, children, rural hospitals, nursing homes and many others.
  - Produced numerous documents detailing the impact the Republican scheme to end Medicaid would have on the various populations across the country, often with state or county level data.
  - Played a key role in defeating the Republican scheme to end the Medicaid program.

- Senator Casey authored the **Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) Reauthorization Act of 2014**, which became law and reauthorized the EMSC program through fiscal year 2019. The EMSC program ensures that services for children are well integrated into local medical emergency services systems. It does so by funding pediatric emergency care improvement projects in every state and territory, including Pennsylvania.
- Senator Casey introduced the **Health Insurance for Former Foster Youth Act**. This bill would allow former foster youth who age out of the system to enroll in Medicaid until age 26, regardless of where they currently live. Medicaid to 26 coverage for former foster youth creates parity with young adults who can stay on a parent's plan until the same age. However, under current federal regulations, this coverage is not guaranteed for former foster youth who move across state lines.

Protecting and Improving the Affordable Care Act

- Senator Casey supported the **Affordable Care Act (ACA)**. The ACA is increasing access to health coverage for Americans and established new protections for people who have health insurance. He has repeatedly fought against partisan schemes and attempts by the Administration to undermine the consumer protections and coverage options provided under the law, and will continue to push for commonsense, bipartisan solutions that will increase access and bring down the cost of health care.
- To provide more choices for Americans and help keep premiums down, Senator Casey supports:
  - A public option for health insurance on the ACA marketplace, such as the **State Public Option Act** (S. 2001).
  - A Medicare buy-in option for individuals 55-64 that would enable them to buy into the Medicare program, such as the **Medicare at 55 Act** (S. 1742).
- Senator Casey supported the expansion of Medicaid to individuals earning up to 133 percent of the federal poverty rate. Pennsylvania expanded Medicaid to these individuals in 2015.

Promoting Medical Research and Innovation

- Senator Casey is a strong supporter of federal investment in biomedical research. Each year, he leads a bipartisan group of Senators in a letter calling for sustained funding to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In recent years, the NIH budget has increased $2 billion – $3 billion per year as a result of this bipartisan effort.
- Senator Casey has also supported legislation to increase funding and create new funding streams for federal medical research programs, including the **21st Century Cures Act** in 2016.
- Senator Casey authored the **Creating Hope Act**, and advocated for its inclusion as part of the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA), which passed in 2012. The provision in FDASIA based on the Creating Hope Act established a pilot program that incentivizes the development of new drugs for rare pediatric diseases. Because this program was set to expire in September 2016, Senator Casey also authored the **Advancing Hope Act**, which provided an extension for the program when it was signed into law.

Access to Prescription Drugs

- Senator Casey believes that all Americans, regardless of age or income, should be able to access the prescription drugs they need to be healthy. He has been deeply disturbed by recent stories of price hikes for many common or life-saving medications, and has been actively involved in

investigations through the Special Committee on Aging and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

- He has repeatedly demanded accountability from drug companies that have made unreasonable drug price hikes, and supports legislation to bring down the cost of prescription drugs.
- Senator Casey supports allowing prescription drug importation from Canada and other countries with similar regulations to ensure drug safety and effectiveness. He is a cosponsor of Senator Sanders's bill, the **Affordable and Safe Prescription Drug Importation Act** (S. 469).
- Senator Casey has consistently supported efforts to close the Medicare Part D "donut hole" to reduce the burden that seniors and people with disabilities face in affording the prescription drugs they need. In 2017, more than 4.6 million beneficiaries reached the coverage gap and saved more than $5.7 billion on their medications due to the prescription drug discount program. These savings averaged about $1,237 per person. Between 2010, when the ACA began to address the donut hole, and 2016, Pennsylvanians saved a total of $1,596,783,339 billion on prescriptions drugs.

Healthcare Resources for Pennsylvanians

- If you need health insurance and are under age 65, please visit the health insurance marketplace at www.healthcare.gov for information on how to find health insurance, when to enroll, determine your family's eligibility for Medicaid, CHIP or a subsidy for private insurance, and other resources. Open season, when anyone can enroll, occurs annually in November and December, but you may be able to enroll at another time if you experience a change like losing another source of insurance, getting married/divorced or having a baby. You can also call 1-800-318-2596, or find local help at https://localhelp.healthcare.gov/#intro.
- If you are a senior and require assistance enrolling in Medicare or paying for your prescription medication, please contact the Pennsylvania Department of Aging APPRISE Program at 1-800-783-7067. APPRISE is a service for Pennsylvanians age 60 and above, regardless of income.
- Please do not hesitate to call Senator Casey's Harrisburg office at (717) 231-7540 or visit http://casey.senate.gov/constituents/casework/.