

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
BUDGET  
ENERGY AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
FINANCE  
HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

August 28, 2013

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Marilyn B. Tavenner  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius and Administrator Tavenner:

I am writing regarding the upcoming enrollment of individuals in the Health Insurance Marketplaces. At last count, 26 states, including Ohio, will have federally-run Marketplaces. An additional seven states will partner with the federal government in this effort. These Marketplaces are slated to begin open enrollment on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013.

Given that the October 1<sup>st</sup> deadline for open enrollment is rapidly approaching, I continue to have significant concerns that the infrastructure is not in place to handle the large number of individuals who will be obtaining their insurance through the Marketplaces. A report commissioned by the state of Ohio estimated that 540,000 Ohioans will obtain insurance through the federally-administered Health Insurance Marketplace by 2017, this accounts for nearly five percent of the entire population of the state.

I have heard from constituents concerned that there has been minimal leadership from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) at the state level. I respectfully request that you provide detailed information describing the coordination effort HHS has had with the state of Ohio. Specifically, who from HHS is acting as the liaison between the state and the federal government to ensure that the enrollment occurs as planned?

In addition to concerns about the lack of leadership from HHS, I also have ongoing concerns about the Information Technology (IT) capabilities of the Marketplace to handle the large number of individuals who will be utilizing the portal to obtain health insurance. Will the necessary IT systems be ready to process the large amount of data and information on day one of enrollment? Has HHS tested these IT systems to ensure that they will be able to handle such a large data volume? What were the results of that testing?

Given that the open enrollment period is rapidly approaching, I would appreciate your immediate attention to these matters and a response as soon as possible. I am deeply concerned that the Marketplaces will not be operational in time and this will result in confusion and disarray for Ohioans seeking to obtain health insurance on the individual insurance market. Finally, I would urge you to delay the start of the enrollment period until the necessary leadership and preparation are in place to ensure that the Marketplace can handle the volume on day one of enrollment.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob Portman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rob Portman