



THE PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE

Obama's Health Care Action Should Be Applauded

Written by Robert Woodard

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR



A young Charles Barkley gets his hair cut at Woodard's Barbershop in Wynnefield.

— PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT WOODARD

Dear President Barack Obama, My name is Robert Woodard. I am a neighborhood barber in the city of Philadelphia at 5031 Diamond St. in the Wynnefield section.

I want to applaud you on your interview with sports announcer Charles Barkley. What a great interview! I know Barkley as one of the greatest basketball players of all time. But to see his performance on TV with you, as a broadcaster and an interviewer, was extremely insightful, which leads me to why I am writing this letter.

Having you, as a person of color to become the president of the United States of America is truly an honor. As a fellow brother of darker hue, I appreciate your struggle to push for every citizen, rich or poor, to have adequate health care. Our nation is suffering with many illnesses: bigotry, hatred, prejudice, gay bashing and the illusion of racism.

Race is a singular, not a plural. When we use it as a plural, it divides us, allowing disease to find a common place to set up camp in America. The number one group in our nation on the front line of high blood pressure, heart attack, obesity, stress, diabetes, cancer, stroke, HIV, as well as many mental and emotional diseases are Black males.

These children of past slaves, here in America at one time had very little opportunity to have health care. I thank you for making it possible for every American citizen to have proper health care.

Barbers were the original surgeons and doctors. Just look up the words "barber's pole" online, and see what a wonderful history the barbers had with health and the prevention of disease. I believe we can help to get even more people signed up for Obamacare before the deadline on March 31 and beyond, because health care doesn't stop because you signed up. It begins when you educate yourself about health.

Some people have fears about how people of darker hue are handled in hospitals. I hear their cries every day at my barber shop. In barber shops, we have the opportunity to help them become less afraid, because I feel I am my brother's keeper. I look forward to assisting you and your wife on this journey to help every American citizen get healthy and stay healthy.

Thank you again and continue to do the good work.