



**For Immediate Release**

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**LEDA LISTENS TOUR: AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTH CARE IN RURAL MIDDLE TENNESSEE A CHALLENGE**

**(Murfreesboro, Tenn., August 12, 2014)** – Lenda Sherrell continues with her “Lenda Listens” tour with a visit to the Community Clinic of Shelbyville to discuss access to health care in rural Middle Tennessee. Sherrell will meet with health care workers and volunteers at 3 p.m. at the clinic located at 200 Dover Street, Shelbyville.

Sherrell, a certified public accountant won Thursday’s Democratic Primary for Tennessee’s 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District with almost 23,000 votes, is on a listening tour to find out how communities in Middle Tennessee are working to improve the lives of residents.

“This nonprofit clinic is an example of what happens when people come together to help others. It does not charge patients and is funded through donations grants and fundraisers. For low-income and uninsured populations, this clinic is a lifesaver,” said Sherrell.

According to the 2014 state health scorecard released by the Commonwealth Fund, Tennessee ranked 40<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states. The rankings were based on categories such as access, prevention and treatment, avoidable hospital use and cost and availability of services. Some flags raised by the study: Tennessee has a high infant mortality rate at 8 per 1,000 births compared to the national rate of 6.3; one in five adults went without care because of costs; the state ranks low for dental care as 18 percent of adults 18 to 64 have lost 6 or more teeth; it has a high death rate from complications that are treatable such as diabetes; and is 43rd in “avoidable hospital use and cost.”

“This study should serve as a wake-up call to our elected officials; people are suffering because people do not have access to care or they cannot afford care. And programs such as TennCare are failing the most vulnerable,” said Sherrell.

The study also found Tennessee received low marks because of the high number of Medicare patients who could have been treated in community clinics such as the one in Shelbyville’s which provides adult preventative care and programs.

“Hospitals often see patients when they have become quite ill; community-centered care is generally less costly and often addresses a problem before it becomes a medical complication,” said Sherrell, who worked as an auditor for non-profit health care institutions. “But in rural areas, community clinics can be the lifeline so many need.”

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