

Health Care: The Way Forward



Where we've been

We've tried...

Market-based health care solutions, for decades.

Many different arrangements for organizing, providing, and paying for health care (PPOs, HMOs, MCOs, ACOs, tiered networks, high-deductible health plans plus health savings accounts, and on and on).

Reining in the costs of prescription drugs (nationally and in Maine).

Making sure that children, the elderly, and those with certain health conditions have access to health care (Medicare and Medicaid).

Mandating that people have health insurance, often purchased through the existing health insurance industry (ACA).

Making health care pricing more transparent so that, in theory, people could shop for the care they need.

Time for a different approach

A publicly funded, privately delivered, universal health care system that includes everyone.

This system would dramatically reduce complexity and administrative burden, and promote health care as a public good that's essential for a healthy democratic society—like schools, roads, and fire departments.

Where we are

We spend more on care and drugs yet have poorer health outcomes and don't cover everyone.

More than 100 million people in the U.S. have medical debt, and close to 40% of Americans say they have put off medical care due to cost.

Health care providers are burning out, hitting rural areas especially hard.

Costs continue to rise steeply, hurting individuals and families, municipalities, businesses, and society as a whole.

8.3% of Americans (5.7% in Maine) remain uninsured. Many more are underinsured and can't get the care they need.

"All around the world, you see heavy government involvement in health care. There's a reason for this. The market will not deliver universal, affordable health care on its own."

—Economist Mark Thoma, [CBS MoneyWatch](#), 2017

Will it be easy to implement fundamental change to our health care system? No.

But staying on our current path will not be easy, either.

Systemic change is possible, if we can find the political will and build the cultural momentum. And if we work together.

Imagine:

Everyone has health care. Crippling **medical debt and medical bankruptcies disappear.** **Maine towns and cities** can apply funds, time, and other resources now spent on health insurance toward pressing needs such as infrastructure maintenance, economic development, and preparing for climate change impacts. **Businesses** can focus on innovation and investment rather than providing health insurance to their employees. **Workers** are free to choose employment based on their interests and skills rather than being locked in a job for health insurance. **Entrepreneurs** are free to create new businesses without worrying about how they'll provide health care for themselves, their families, and their employees. With a **simpler, more efficient system**, it's more feasible to **plan for and contain costs**.

The obstacles are not economic or medical, they're political

Many studies have shown that universal health care systems can save money and increase value. A Maine Center for Economic Policy study in 2019 outlined one model for how universal health care could work in Maine, finding that the state could save more than \$1 billion, most people, by far, would pay less than they do now, and everyone would be covered.

[MECEP fiscal study](#)

What can Maine legislators do?

- Pass LD 590 to establish a constitutional right to health care
- Create a Joint Select Committee on Health Care Costs as a step toward creating a new system
- Build a health care caucus (we're here to help!)

Questions? Thoughts? Ideas?
We want to hear from you!

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Sources: [NPR](#) (3/7/23); [Gallup](#) (1/17/23); [Maine.gov](#) (9/19/22); [Peterson Foundation](#) (11/17/22)

HealthCareforALLMaine

ADVOCATING FOR COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH-QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL MAINE PEOPLE

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