

Living sicker, dying younger in the richest country on Earth



IN THIS EPISODE

Why is reforming our healthcare system necessary? Is there any point in trying to change it, given the power of health insurers and pharmaceutical companies? Find out from someone who's spent decades fighting and winning battles for healthcare justice. Join **Anthony Wright**, executive director of [Health Access](#), a health consumer advocacy coalition, and host **Brenda Gazzar** in this first of two podcasts. Learn why reform is absolutely imperative. ***Can legislators afford to sit back while healthcare inflation chokes our economy?***

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WE DISCUSS

Why do you think winning universal health care is so important?

“The question of whether we have universal health care is literally the question of whether we care for one another, both literally and figuratively. And so it's a worthy goal to work for, both for the very practical impact of trying to prevent people from living sicker, dying younger, being one emergency away from

financial ruin and what we can do if we have a system that actually takes care of everybody in the right way.” – **Anthony Wright**

Talk about why you wanted to serve on Governor Gavin Newsom’s Healthy California for All Commission.

“...Health Access has been involved in supporting multiple efforts at reforming our healthcare system over, you know, many, many years including getting to a single-payer universal healthcare system. That's something that this organization has believed in since our start and when the legislative and administrative conversations came to the point of ‘we need to have a commission to sort of delve into the details,’ we figured we had something to contribute, with regard to *not just the history* of health reform in California, but also having been in a lot of these negotiations and advocacy efforts to do these reforms. We know a lot of what it takes to get to the end goal and we wanted to be able to contribute...to make sure that this was as successful as possible. So I put my name in and along with others, I was appointed by the Assembly speaker [Anthony Rendon] to be on the commission.” – **Anthony Wright**

Name one compelling reason that California needs to implement single-payer reform.

“...moving to such a system would save lives and...money...There have been academic studies that have said as much, but to really detail out that - *if we do nothing, our healthcare system would cost another \$160 billion each year within a decade* if we don't act. That is a staggering amount of money that frankly we do not have...This is really important and the current system is not sustainable in the long term without some fairly major reforms so that healthcare inflation is not going up at multiple times....If it continues to do that, it crowds out the economic growth. It crowds out investment in education and other key social services that actually keep us healthy. It prevents wage growth.” – **Anthony Wright**

Helpful Links

[California's Health Consumer Advocacy Coalition](#)

Health Access

[Governor Newsom Announces Healthy California for All Commission](#)

Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

[An Environmental Analysis of Health Care Delivery, Coverage, and Financing in California](#)

Healthy California for All Commission

[Key Design Considerations for a Unified Health Care Financing System in California](#)

Healthy California for All Commission

[High Health Care Prices are the Primary Driver of California Workers' Health Care Cost Problems](#)

UC Berkeley Labor Center

[In Their Own Words: How Fragmented Care Harms People with Both Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorder](#)

California Health Care Foundation

Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#).

Guest Biography

ANTHONY E. WRIGHT (He, Him) has served as Executive Director for [Health Access](#), the statewide health care consumer advocacy coalition since 2002. Health Access has led state and national efforts to win consumer protections, fight budget cuts and invest in our safety-net, encourage prevention, and advance coverage expansions and comprehensive health reform. Wright led California's coalition effort to help pass the Affordable Care Act and state laws to implement and improve it, and campaigns to successfully pass first-in-the-nation laws to ensure timely access to care, and to stop hospital overcharging of the uninsured.

As a consumer advocate and community organizer, Wright has been widely quoted in state and national media. He has also worked for New Jersey Citizen Action, the Center for Media Education, The Nation magazine, and in Vice President Gore's office in the White House.

Born and raised in the Bronx, Wright graduated from Amherst College magna cum laude in both English and Sociology. He lives in Davis with his wife Jessica, and his son Jefferson.

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Tell your [state senator and assembly member](#) to work with the governor to implement single payer and save California \$500 billion in healthcare costs over the next 10 years!

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[Join Healthy California Now](#) - a coalition working toward a California single-payer system. Individual and organizational memberships available.