

Connecting the dots: A legislative path to healthcare justice?



IN THIS EPISODE

Since the free market has failed to rein in costs and achieve equity in health care, what's next? Can we govern our seemingly ungovernable healthcare sector? Can we build legislative consensus around policies that protect all of us, equally? Join **Anthony Wright**, executive director of [Health Access](#), a health consumer advocacy coalition, and host **Brenda Gazzar** for the lowdown on California legislation that will hold health plans accountable for quality, cost control and reducing disparities. *Will the state's purchasing power be enough to move the needle on single payer?*

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WE DISCUSS

What health policies are key building blocks to single payer?

“...the expansion of coverage and getting to some form of universal access to care is critically important – so expanding Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status, but also providing greater affordability assistance in Covered California so nobody has to spend more than a percentage of their income on coverage and that we can reduce or even eliminate deductibles and other forms of cost sharing

that prohibit people from getting the care that they need. A lot of the work that we're doing is also in the focus of trying to get to a more equitable system and a more affordable healthcare system, holding the industry accountable for that.” – **Anthony Wright**

What's being proposed to rein in the cost of health care?

“The **Office of Healthcare Affordability** ([AB 1130](#), **Wood**) would set cost targets for the industry by region and sector that would be enforceable so that providers don't get to charge whatever they want or whatever they can get away with but you know have some goals with regard to affordability....Assembly member Wood also has another bill [[AB 2080](#)] that we're excited about, which deals with the issue of healthcare consolidation.” – **Anthony Wright**

What do you think is essential to winning single payer?

“...as a community organizer, I believe that changing our healthcare system is not going to take one bill or it's not going to take one campaign for one piece of legislation.

It's going to need a movement and a movement that requires a series of victories and wins over a period of time,..this is not something that's done overnight and especially on something that people care about so deeply like health care. We need to build trust.

There's so much cynicism out there and those who want to keep the status quo use that cynicism to attack any form of change, any form of reform. We need to sort of show that, ‘Hey, we can actually make improvements, and that builds the trust and builds the momentum for the next improvement and the next reform.’ – **Anthony Wright**

Helpful Links

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

[Single Payer: Navigating the Tricky Route From Here to There](#)
Voices of the Governing Institute

[The Office of Health Care Affordability](#)
Health Access

[AB 1130 California Health Care Quality and Affordability Act](#)
Assemblyman Jim Wood

[AB 2080 Health Care Consolidation and Contracting Fairness Act of 2022](#)
Assemblyman Jim Wood (Health Access)

[Health Care Cost Commissions: How Eight States Address Cost Growth](#)
California Health Care Foundation

[Today's High Inflation Will Increase Retirement Health Care Costs...Forever](#)
Money.com

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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