



## 'Sea change' or 'status quo?' The midterms & U.S. health policy

*Featuring Michael Lighty,  
Healthy California Now*

## IN THIS EPISODE

This time on Code WACK!. ***What do the tight midterm elections mean for our nation's health care?*** Hanging in the balance are the fates of those who are [dependent on pandemic emergency programs](#) for their health care and millions of American seniors who [anxiously face the privatization of traditional Medicare](#).

To find out, we asked **Michael Lighty**, president of [Healthy California Now](#), a statewide coalition dedicated to winning single payer, Medicare for All in the Golden State. He was also the healthcare constituency director for Bernie Sanders 2020. This is the first of two pods about the election results with Mr. Lighty.

## SHOW NOTES

## WE DISCUSS

## *Were reproductive rights really the issue that drove Democrats to the polls?*

"Well, there's no question that ... when 60% to 70% of the electorate supports an issue like access to abortion, it's going to have an electoral impact. And that's what we saw." – **Michael Lighty**

## *Will the midterms have any impact on the corporatization of health care, or should we just expect more of the same?*

"In some ways it's a status quo election result ... I frankly think that there is going to be some pushback at the state level on some of the corporatization of health care that we've seen, particularly in Medicaid.

"I think there's more interest in de-privatizing Medicaid and getting the for-profit insurance companies out of Medicaid ... So in that sense, there's a potential for progress." – **Michael Lighty**

## *How else could the midterms affect healthcare reform at the national level?*

"... the federal level is tough to gauge.

"I think we can say that the really big threats to Medicare and Social Security are off the table because Republicans don't have both houses . . . but they were definitely gonna go after Medicare ...

"I think there is going to be a need, politically, to address healthcare inflation. Now, what that usually means when you're not doing single payer, is restricting access to services ... trying to make changes on the delivery side ... [promoting] schemes like ACO REACH or ... Medicare Advantage." – **Michael Lighty**

# Helpful Links

[Health Care In The 2022 Midterm Election](#), *Kaiser Family Foundation/AP VoteCast*

[How abortion rights swayed results in the midterm election](#), *PBS News Hour*

[Way Too Early Preview: What the Midterm Election Results Might Mean for Health Policy in 2023](#), *National Law Review*

[Observations on Corporatization of Healthcare Systems in America](#), *Missouri Medicine (National Library of Medicine)*

[Here's What The Midterm Election Means For Seniors And Their Families](#), *Forbes*

[Millions at risk of losing health insurance if U.S. ends Covid public health emergency in January](#), *CNBC*

[Midterm Election Outcomes Indicate Broad Support for Equitable, Affordable Health Care and Coverage for All](#), *Community Catalyst*

# Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

# Biography: Michael Lighty

**Michael Lighty**, President, [Healthy California Now](#), has organized, advocated and developed policy for single-payer, Medicare for All nationally and in California for over 30 years.

He is a founding Fellow of the [Sanders Institute](#), and most recently, he was the Healthcare Constituency Director for Bernie 2020.

Formerly he was director of public policy for the California Nurses Association/ National Nurses United. He was lead policy analyst, a leader of Campaign for a Healthy California and testified on behalf of the single-payer bill, SB 562.

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