



'Treasure & lives' at stake as states fight for guaranteed health care

Featuring Michael Lighty, Healthy California Now

IN THIS EPISODE

This time on Code WACK!. How do the results of the midterm elections affect the prospect for state-based single payer healthcare systems? **Will state governments continue to subsidize the private insurance system and defend the status quo as we lose money and lives?**

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 second of two pods about the election results with Mr. Lighty.

SHOW NOTES

WE DISCUSS

Do you think the Biden administration will be receptive to supporting state-based single payer systems?

"I do think the Biden administration will be receptive to state single-payer systems, in part because the states that might very well, you know, request it, like California, are very politically powerful..." – **Michael Lighty**

What's up with the New York Health Act?

"[New York Health Act](#) is definitely going through kind of a transformation because the historic author, [Richard Gottfried](#), has retired from the New York Assembly . . .

"[The bill] was not brought to a floor vote and what emerged was a very significant level of opposition from, particularly, the public sector unions. So it turns out many of those are the uniformed services, so . . . police, to some extent firefighters, but there's also opposition from the Municipal Labor Council in New York City. . .

". . . there's a kind of interlocking current around these issues with labor at the center of how you're going to address the continuing costs for active workers and how that's going to impact wage increases." – **Michael Lighty**

What about Mass Care, Massachusetts' Medicare for All campaign, which put single payer on the ballot in 20 districts as a non-binding policy question?

"I think this is at least the second round, maybe more, of these district-based initiatives and this time it was more ambitious, I think, and very effective. It basically puts pressure on the state reps in particular, or the congressional

reps from that area to say, look this is a vote of the constituents. It may be non-binding, but if you want to know where your constituents, as opposed to your donors, stand, here it is. – **Michael Lighty**

Let's talk about California. Do you think Gov. Gavin Newsom still cares about single payer?

"...there are indications, clearly, that substantively, in terms of staff and personnel and policy, that the governor is still moving in that direction. But I do think the fight ultimately now turns to the (state) legislature and that, yes, what is the Newsom administration going to negotiate with the Biden administration in terms of the federal support for California, but most especially, what kind of program is the legislature going to adopt that will ultimately be put on the ballot?" – **Michael Lighty**

Helpful Links

[An unexpected winner in the midterms: public health](#), *The Hill*

[How Health-Related Ballot Measures Fared in the Midterms](#), *U.S. News*

[Campaign for New York Health Act](#)

[A single payer system in New York State](#), *New York State Nurses Association*

[Single-Payer Question Passes in All 20 Districts](#), *MassCare*

[Oregon Measure 111, Right to Healthcare Amendment \(2022\)](#), *Ballotpedia*

[The Washington Health Trust Ballot Initiative 1471](#) , *Whole Washington*

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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