

Corporate health care?

**It's NOT what the
doctor ordered!**



IN THIS EPISODE

This time on Code WACK! **What say should doctors have in reforming America's healthcare system?** Are their decades-long **efforts to stop the commercialization of medicine** having an impact? **How can health professionals, and students in the health sciences, get involved** in the movement for single-payer health care?

To find out, we spoke to the new president of [Physicians for a National Health Program](#) (PNHP), [Dr. Philip Verhoef](#), an adult and pediatric intensivist and Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

Find out the main strategies, goals and challenges of PNHP, the only single-issue physician led organization advocating for Medicare for All in America. And learn about the growing influence of [Students for a National Health Program](#) (SNaHP) in the single-payer movement.

SHOW NOTES

WE DISCUSS

Would you say the prospects for an equitable, universal healthcare system in America have improved since the 1980s, when Physicians for a National Health Program was founded?

"...if you look over these last 35 years or so, we've seen attempts at getting a universal system up and running only to be completely squashed by corporate interests..."

"...the federal government is actually taking Medicare and putting it in the hands of private insurance companies ... and so, in many ways, you might argue we're in worse shape now than we were 35 years ago in spite of the efforts that we have made" – **Dr. Philip Verhoef**

What role can doctors play in reforming the healthcare system and how can you engage them in the effort?

"... we won't achieve single payer unless we get more healthcare professionals ... behind it and so a lot of the work that we're doing now is really targeted at expanding our membership, expanding the knowledge base among professional organizations and state medical societies." – **Dr. Philip Verhoef**

Talk to us about the Students for a National Health Program (SNaHP) and how it fits into PNHP's overall strategy.

"... we look at this as part of the long game. I don't know when single-payer is going to happen in this country. I have faith that it will, and I'm going to continue to work to make it so, but the more students that we can bring into this, the more physicians we will have out there who support this as a solution ..."

"And so they have brought an amazing energy to PNHP'S efforts. We now have SNaHP representatives serving on our national board... so they're literally influencing the direction that PNHP goes. And I just couldn't be more excited about [their] involvement" – ***Dr. Philip Verhoef***

What is it that unites members of PNHP?

" ... we simply want the best care for our patients. We want them to be able to get what they need, and we want to see people healthy. You know, those of us that engage in this advocacy, it's not stuff we do because we seek fame. It certainly doesn't pay us anything.

"This is work that we do as physicians outside of our otherwise busy lives. But it's because we believe in it. And we really believe that this is the best solution to help out patients in this country and so we're going to keep fighting." – ***Dr. Philip Verhoef***

Helpful Links

[About PNHP](#), *Physicians for a National Health Program*

[A New Generation of Activist Doctors Is Fighting for Medicare for All](#),
Time.com

[Majority of Healthcare Professionals Support Single-Payer System, Poll Says](#), *Medscape*

[Medicare For All: The Social Transformation Of US Health Care](#), *Health Affairs*

[Advocating for a single-payer healthcare system: What is the role of public health academics?](#), *Science Direct*

[Envisioning a Better U.S. Health Care System for All: Coverage and Cost of Care](#), *Annals of Internal Medicine*

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Dr. Philip Verhoef - *Biography*

Dr. Phil Verhoef is an adult and pediatric intensivist and Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

As a single-payer advocate, he is the current president (and a national board member) of Physicians for a National Health Program; past president of the Illinois Single Payer Coalition; past president of the PNHP-IL chapter; and was faculty advisor for the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine SNaHP chapter since its inception, prior to moving to Hawaii in 2019. His health care reform and single-payer-related publications include letters, op-eds, and editorials in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Chest*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Springfield Journal-Register*, and kevinmd.com.

Dr. Verhoef completed medical and graduate training at Case Western Reserve University, followed by residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at UCLA and subspecialty ICU fellowship training at the University of Chicago. He has led an NIH-funded research lab studying the immunology of sepsis in the ICU and his scientific work has been published in *Nature*, *PNAS*, *AJRCCM*, *AJRCMB*, *JCI-Insight*, and the *Journal of Immunology*. Dr. Verhoef is interested in improving the care of septic patients through a precise understanding of their immune systems in response to infection, using a range of translational and “big data” methodologies.

Get Involved / Take Action

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