

# Burnout is wearing doctors down. Could Medicare for All help?



*Dr. David Leibowitz*

## *This time on Code WACK!*

***What are the most common concerns of doctors about Medicare for All?*** Would reforming America's broken healthcare system improve - *or worsen* - doctors' lives? **How does the focus on corporate profits affect doctors' experience?**

To find out, we spoke to **Dr. David Leibowitz**, hematologist-oncologist and past chair of [Physicians for a National Health Program - California](#), a non-partisan voluntary organization that supports equitable access to high quality health care as a right to all people.

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## **WE DISCUSS**

## ***What do you think are the biggest concerns doctors have about adopting Medicare for All?***

"I think as would be true for most people, physicians are concerned about their ... income and the freedom to practice the way they would like to practice, and they're worried that both of those would disappear.

"Part of this relates to the fact that more and more doctors are employed rather than independent, so that even now a doctor's freedom - *in terms of how they treat patients* - is not as great as it once was because companies that want to make money would like to have doctors practice in a way that is less expensive." – **David Leibowitz, MD**

## ***Proposed Medicare for All plans focus a lot on primary care. Why?***

"...having enough primary care physicians to take care of everyone makes a lot of difference in terms of how much health care costs.

"...if you have people kind of running willy-nilly to see specialists who are only looking at a small part of the individual and generally charge more, you end up with health care that's not very well synchronized. It's not cohesive.

"That's what a primary care doctor can do, can make sure that the whole person is cared for in the appropriate way. And so Canada has a much larger number of primary care doctors per person in the population (and that's actually true for all the other developed countries also). And improved Medicare for All programs usually include some way to encourage doctors to go into primary care." – **David Leibowitz, MD**

## *What do physicians have to gain with improved Medicare for All?*

“Well, they would probably not burn out as much. Doctors today sometimes spend as much as three hours a day with paperwork documentation.

“...if you compare the size of notes in the United States compared to other countries, it's about four times as large. And that's not because the care is four times as good, it's because the whole set of regulations related to reimbursement has meant that doctors' notes have become voluminous and contain a lot of information that actually can be quite distracting and make it make it difficult to find the little bits of information that you actually need to take care of someone.” - **David Leibowitz, MD**

## Helpful Links

[Physicians for a National Health Program - California](#)

[How Would Medicare for All Affect Physician Revenue?](#) *Journal of General & Internal Medicine*

[Nation's 2nd- largest physician group backs 'Medicare for All'](#), *Healthcare Dive*

[What is physician burnout?](#), *American Medical Association*

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

## Episode Transcript

*Read the full [episode transcript](#).*

## Biography: David Leibowitz, MD

**Dr. David Leibowitz** is the past Chair of the [California state chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program](#).

Dr. Leibowitz's career had two parts, first roughly 20 years doing research, and then 20 years practicing hematology-oncology.

He was outraged by the expense of new cancer drugs and the profit-taking by oncologists, insurance companies, and drug companies. He joined PNHP in 2017 to help remake the US healthcare system.

*Click for his complete [Curriculum Vitae](#).*

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