

Saving the American Economy with Single Payer: A Second Look



IN THIS EPISODE

This Independence Day we're thinking about the freedom to pursue our dreams. The high cost of health care makes it difficult or impossible for Americans to afford higher education, or retirement, and the impact on business is severe too, as employers [struggle to afford health care](#) for their workers.

Thirteen years after the Affordable Care Act passed, health care in America is still marked by inequity and spiraling costs. ***Could single payer free us to pursue our dreams of financial security and independence?***

To find out, join **Ian Lewis**, political & research director at the [National Union of Healthcare Workers](#), and a board member of California's [Office of Health Care Affordability](#).

SHOW NOTES

WE DISCUSS

How would switching to single payer affect businesses?

“...with the huge savings that we could realize with single-payer health care, the long-term benefits for all businesses are tremendous...” – **Ian Lewis**

But what would happen to the people who work in the insurance industry?

“The kind of jobs that will be eliminated...are mostly the administrative ones, the paper shuffling, the processing of claims...Now, those job losses will be offset some by the creation of a single administrative system, but the simplification, the elimination of claims and adjustment proceedings and appeals and so forth, those kinds of jobs open up the opportunity to train people in, you know, what I see as the jobs of the future, you know, *health care*...”

“...the economic stimulus that comes with injecting tens and eventually hundreds of billions of dollars more money into the rest of the economy, which is not health care, will unleash real job creation in other industries.” – **Ian Lewis**

Do you think single payer is actually within reach?

“I just say I'm more optimistic than I've ever been about the promise of transitioning to a single-payer health system...”

This report, it's very technical. It's wordy, it's long and it hasn't received a lot of coverage, but it lays out a roadmap that if we choose to, we can follow and I really believe that by pointing that way, it provides us hope. That's the biggest obstacle I see to reform...the lack of hope...

“...there is a moral and fiscal imperative to do this because the consequences of not making this happen are catastrophic.” – **Ian Lewis**

Helpful Links

[Healthcare costs top \\$31,000 for family of 4 in 2023](#), *Healthcare Dive*

[Fundamental health reform like 'Medicare for All' would help the labor market](#), *Economic Policy Institute*

[U.S. businesses are trying to control employee health care costs](#), *WFAE 90.7, Charlotte, NC*

[REPORT CLAIMS 'UNIFIED FINANCING' COULD SAVE CA \\$500B OVER 10 YEARS](#)

Health Leaders Media

[Key Design Considerations for a Unified Health Care Financing System in California](#), pages 29 - 33

Healthy California for All Commission

[National Union of Healthcare Workers](#)

[Sen. Bernie Sanders renews push for Medicare for All to end 'totally broken' health-care system](#), *CNBC*

Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#).

Guest Biography

Ian Lewis is research director for the [National Union of Healthcare Workers](#).

In this role, Lewis directs research and political staff to support policy initiatives, collective bargaining, and electoral efforts including policy research & advocacy, health industry corporate analysis, quantitative support for collective bargaining with health employers, and organizing community and political relationships. He is also trustee of a multi-employer health benefits fund covering thousands of participants in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Lewis is appointed to the Health Care Affordability Board by the Speaker of the California Assembly, Anthony Rendon, required by the Office of Healthcare Affordability's enabling statute (SB 184, Chapter 47, Statutes of 2022).

Lewis has been in the labor movement for twenty-five years, much of that time making the best of a broken health care system for low wage workers.

Prior to joining the National Union of Healthcare Workers, Lewis was the Research Director for Unite Here Local 2 coordinating political and community activities for collective bargaining and legislative efforts.

Lewis' experience includes bargaining for health benefits in both the US and Canada, administration of not-for-profit health funds, as well as regulatory and legislative strategies. He has been closely involved in efforts by the Healthy California Now coalition to win Medicare for All in California.

Lewis has a bachelor's degree in Government and Africana studies from Cornell University.

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