



Hostages to health care? The American workers' dilemma

Featuring Rose Roach

THIS TIME ON CODE WACK!

In honor of **Labor Day**, we're looking at the trade-offs some workers face in order to have health care. ***What choices are families forced to make when they can't afford to insure everyone?***

To find out, we spoke to **Rose Roach**, chair of [Healthcare for All Minnesota](#) and national coordinator for the [Labor Campaign for Single Payer](#). She recently retired as the executive director of the Minnesota Nurses Association.

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WE DISCUSS

You're the voluntary national coordinator for the Labor Campaign for Single Payer. What is the Labor Campaign and why was it founded?

"...the Labor Campaign was founded back in 2009 because it just became really evident to a number of labor leaders and labor members across the United States that trying to bargain health benefits has just not been working all that well for us ... that what we really needed to do would get it off the bargaining table altogether.

"And ... we should be fighting for Medicare for All and join in and help to lead the healthcare justice movement in this country. " – **Rose Roach**

How does healthcare affect collective bargaining and what would it really mean for workers to take that off the table completely?

"Well, we would know that we had guaranteed health care whether we liked the job we were in currently or not.

"We could have more mobility, you know, and portability – for ourselves personally, for our own personal growth or [for] people who want to start a business ...

"We would be able to concentrate money on other types of benefits. Things like defined benefit pensions. " - **Rose Roach**

What role do you think labor can play in achieving a truly fair and sustainable healthcare system?

“Labor can be out front in telling stories, talking about why it is important that health care is not...tied to employment and how it is not doing any workers any real benefit when it is like that, when it can just be used against us.

“I think that in this country, the labor movement has been at the forefront of all great social change that has happened and this is no different.

“And that is a big part of what the Labor Campaign stands for. We do lots of education, provide all kinds of resources and open up space for all of labor, whether they support Medicare for All or not, to have the conversation about why not, what are your concerns? What would we need to do to bring you on board or what would make you feel better about moving in that direction?” –

Rose Roach

Helpful Links

[Labor Campaign for Single Payer](#)

[The Most Unionized U.S. Occupations in 2022](#)

**[Why American wages haven't grown despite increases in productivity](#),
CNBC**

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

[In Focus: How Unions Act as a Force for Change in Health Care Delivery and Payment](#), *The Commonwealth Fund*

Episode Transcript

Read the full [episode transcript](#).

Biography: Rose Roach

Rose Roach is the National Coordinator for the [Labor Campaign for Single Payer](#) and serves as Chair of [Healthcare for All Minnesota](#). She recently retired as the Executive Director of the MN Nurses Association, MNA, after 34 years in the labor movement having represented public school employees in both MN, her home state, and CA before being hired at MNA in 2014.

For two decades, Rose has been involved in the healthcare justice movement, as a trainer and national speaker while working with elected officials to craft legislation that moves us to a patient/provider centered healthcare system.

Rose was recognized by the MN Physician's Magazine as one of their quadrennials, top 100 leaders in healthcare in 2016 and 2020. Rose has served on former MN Governor Mark Dayton's Healthcare Financing Task Force as well as MN's Attorney General, Keith Ellison's, Lowering Pharmaceutical Costs Task Force.

Recently she received the Women's Trailblazer Award from Congresswoman Ilhan Omar and was the 2019 recipient of the MN Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party's Paul Wellstone Lifetime Commitment to Organized Labor Award.

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