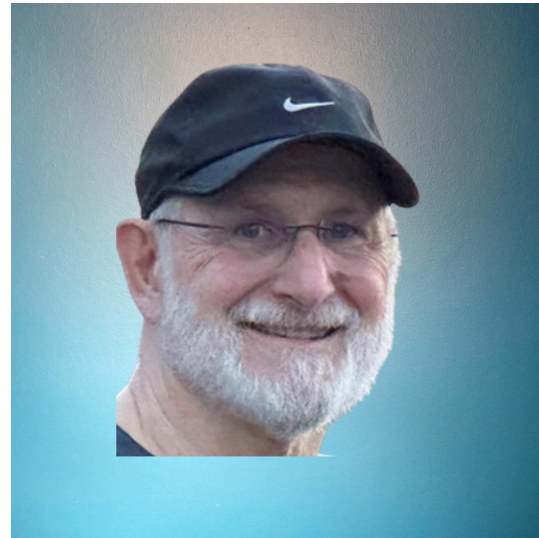


Why the Same Drug Costs 3x More (And Who Decides)

Featuring
Bob Coleman



This time on Code WACK!

Imagine two patients ... *same diagnosis, same medication, same country.* Each one needs the same prescription. One gets their care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, the other gets it through Medicare. ***The price of the exact same drug could be half as much for one patient as for the other. That's not a glitch. It's how the system is designed.***

Our guest is **Bob Coleman**, a retired healthcare professional who spent more than 40 years serving veterans through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs—as a clinical pharmacist, medical informaticist, and researcher. His latest ebook is called "[Hostile Takeover: How Wall Street and Congress Hijacked American Healthcare and How We Can Take it Back.](#)"

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In your ebook, [Hostile Takeover: How Wall Street and Congress Hijacked American Healthcare and How We Can Take It Back](#), you refer to a political protection racket. What do you mean by that?

Coleman: I wanna be very clear, I'm not suggesting anything illegal, but perhaps conspiratorial.

I'm describing a structural pattern of incentives and influence that exist in large systems and particularly in our healthcare system. And the US healthcare system is really large.

The GDP of the United States is around \$5 trillion, and the healthcare system is around 20% of that at that scale, and that much money and that higher percentage of our economy that's naturally deeply connected to politics and policy.

There's substantial lobbying by healthcare sectors. There's campaign contributions and ongoing engagement with policy makers. Over time, these forces create alignment between economic interests and political decision making.

What practical steps can individuals take to advance healthcare reform?

Coleman: I think with the healthcare system... it is ...overwhelming. Change in large systems does not happen at once.

And so in my mind, I put together this little loop of what I think needs to happen for reform.

The first part of that loop is understanding and awareness. Once the public gets educated, the next step is civic and political engagement.

Contact representatives of town halls, ask healthcare specific questions, support candidates focused on reform.

Until there's the political will to do it, it's not really gonna happen. And as we create awareness, it becomes influence. As the public awareness grows, priorities shift, elected officials respond, policy discussions change.

Helpful Links

[Drug Cost Comparisons: Medicare and the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

[Hostile Takeover: How Wall Street and Congress Hijacked American Healthcare and How We Can Take It Back, Robert Coleman](#)

[Unnecessary Deaths: How the Trump Administration Undercut\(s\) Global and US Health Care and Medical Science, Robert Coleman](#)

[Here's What Happens When Doctors, Patients And Lawmakers Unite To Change Healthcare, Forbes](#)

Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#).

Guest Biography - Robert Coleman

Bob spent more than 40 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs, proudly serving those who served our country. Over the course of his career, he worked as a Clinical Pharmacist, Medical Informaticist, and Researcher, always with a focus on improving care and outcomes for patients. He published widely in medical and pharmacy journals, contributing research on infectious disease, anticoagulation, pharmacokinetics, and clinical decision-support tools. A partial list of his peer-reviewed publications is available through his Google Scholar profile: [Robert Coleman](#).

Beyond the research and the data, Bob's work has always been grounded in a deep respect for science and a lifelong commitment to protecting the health of others.

After retiring, Bob redirected his efforts from navigating a broken system to dismantling its logic. [Hostile Takeover](#) is his exposé of the for-profit architecture that prioritizes wealth over health.

His previous eBook, [Unnecessary Deaths](#), shined a light on the ways our systems fail, the policies and practices that cost lives unnecessarily. That was the "why" — *why people are getting hurt, sick, or dying when solutions exist*. **Hostile Takeover** picks up where that leaves off. Here, we go deeper into the "who" and the "how." Who is behind these failures, how America's healthcare system was deliberately reshaped to prioritize profit over stability — and how we can reclaim it.

Host Biography: Brenda Gazzar

Brenda Gazzar, the host and co-producer of **Code WACK!**, has produced over 300 weekly podcast episodes topping 400,000 downloads. A skilled interviewer and storyteller, Brenda brings nuance, curiosity, and clarity to every conversation.

Brenda has worked as a multilingual and award-winning reporter with more than two decades experience in California and the Middle East.

Her work has been published by Reuters, Ms. Magazine, USA Today, Los Angeles Daily News, the Orange County Register, The Wrap, The Jerusalem Post, Cairo Times and numerous other publications. She speaks Spanish, Hebrew, and moderate Arabic and is the recipient of national, state and regional awards.

Brenda also enjoys being a life coach, helping people align with their purpose so they feel fulfilled while achieving their boldest dreams.

Brenda's work is grounded in a belief that systemic change and personal growth go hand in hand — and she's here for both.

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Keywords

insurance denials, prior authorization, healthcare costs, medical billing transparency, patient advocacy, healthcare reform, Medicare for All, insurance appeals, care delays, healthcare system failures, medical debt, health equity, physician burnout, administrative burden, healthcare access, insurance industry practices, denial rates, patient rights, public health policy, healthcare accountability