

## Fighting From the Grave for the New York Health Act

*Featuring*  
*Social Justice Advocates*  
**Susan Karbiner**  
*and Carly Paris*



### *This time on Code WACK!*

*What happens when we get too sick to work in a healthcare system that is tied to our jobs? What is the ultimate cost?*

**The story of New York Health Act advocate, Mariana Pineda, is a case in point.** After developing Long COVID, Mariana spent years navigating the same fragmented healthcare system she was fighting to change. She lost her job. She lost her health insurance. She lost her home. **And earlier this year, in March, 2026, she lost her life. Mariana was just 46 years old.**

This is part two of a two-part series featuring tri-chair of the New York State Poor People's Campaign **Susan Karbiner** and LGBTQ and healthcare justice advocate **Carly Paris**.

## ***SHOW NOTES***

## **WE DISCUSS**

***Mariana spent years fighting for the passage of the New York Health Act, a state-based single-payer bill that would guarantee health coverage for every New Yorker regardless of employment status. When the bill didn't pass, how was she affected?***

**SUSAN:** She'd go to Albany every year to promote the [bill], and she said once she was so disgusted with the legislators ... She said, *"I hope when I die that I die on their doorstep, it will be a good message for them."*

When she was a teacher, before she got COVID, she had what is considered pretty good healthcare insurance through her employer.

Now, why should healthcare have anything to do with employment? This is really dumb. What about people who aren't employed or whose employers don't give them good health insurance? What about people who stay with an abusive husband because they're on his insurance and they don't want to lose it?

She lost her insurance, and she had so many medical problems she couldn't afford to pay for insurance after she used up her savings, and as a result she had to go on Medicaid.

**CARLY:** [After that] She didn't have the insurance to be able to go to specialists, so she was kind of left just floundering, because there was nothing she could do.

She'd go to the hospital, which would help her in the, like, acute stages, and they would eventually ... help her deal with that, but then when she'd leave there, there was really nothing for her to do, because the doctors were unobtainable for her.

# Episode Transcript

Read the [episode transcript](#).

## Helpful Links

[New York Health Act](#)

[What does the New York Health Act cover?](#), *Campaign for New York Health*

[Healthcare Workers Rally for Single Payer Healthcare](#), *ABC News 10*

[MARIANA PINEDA PRESENTE | Videos & Movies on Vimeo](#),

[Hallucinating & Hypertensive: A Long COVID Nightmare](#), *Code WACK!*

[Did NY Dems drop the ball on Medicare for All - again?](#) *Code WACK!*

[Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival](#)

[Mariana Pineda Testimonial](#)

## Guest Biography - Susan Karbiner

Susan has filled a great variety of roles in the course of her 83 years, but is now committed full-time to the advancement of social justice. She is a tri-chair of the **NYS Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival (PPC)** and a coordinator for the PPC's Long Island region,

concentrating on organizing and educating people about the systemic injustices in our society and advocating for change.

She writes a weekly newsletter for the Long Island region, and is on the team that publishes a biweekly newsletter for the NYS PPC.

## Guest Biography - Carly Paris

Carly Paris is an activist from New York who has been organizing for over 10 years.

She saw how broken the healthcare system is firsthand when she was forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket for care for her stage 4 deep infiltrating endometriosis. At that point, she decided she couldn't stay on the sidelines and sit by while people were dying because they had to choose between healthcare and food or rent.

She is not only a fierce advocate for healthcare for all but also for queer rights, environmental justice, women's rights, immigration justice, and much more.

## 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 of 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

***Mariana Pineda, Code WACK!, HEAL California, Medicare for All, healthcare justice, healthcare is a human right, housing is a human right, Long COVID, Medicaid, COBRA, employer-sponsored health insurance, single-payer healthcare, health equity, disability justice, racial justice, medical bias, homelessness, Poor People's Campaign, New York Health Act, Mariana Pineda Presente***

# Contact us

[healteam@heal-ca.org](mailto:healteam@heal-ca.org)

Website: [HEAL California](#)