

Labor Day: Why Every Union Negotiation Is Really About Health Care

Featuring

Mark Dudzic

**Chair, Labor Campaign for
Single Payer Healthcare**



This time on Code WACK!

In honor of Labor Day, we're looking at the powerful connection between work and healthcare in America — ***and what it means for workers when their health coverage is chained to their jobs.*** Against the backdrop of our ever-changing economy, we must ask, ***are the risks of employer-sponsored health insurance greater than the benefits?***

Today's guest is Mark Dudzic, a longtime union organizer and labor activist. He's a former president of Local 8-149 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, now part of the Steelworkers, as well as the OCAW District 8 Council, and a former national organizer of the Labor Party.

In 2009, he co-founded the Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare and currently serves as its chair.

This is the first episode in a two-part series.

Check out the [Transcript](#) and Show Notes for more!

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WE DISCUSS

So many American workers get their healthcare through their work. What are the risks to workers and their families when health care is tied to their employment?

Dudzic: First of all, when you lose your job, you lose your health care. This is particularly significant when you have mass layoffs and hundreds of workers lose their jobs at the same time.

Then you go on strike, you lose your health care. Employers often stop paying for health care benefits once you go on strike, or at least threaten to do so, and it just provides another tool of intimidation that they can use in those types of situations."

Workers are constantly being faced with changing insurance carriers, which might mean that your doctor is no longer in the network, with increasing copays and deductibles, with other terms and conditions that just constantly change every year, every two years.

Transcript

Read this [week's episode transcript](#).

Helpful Links

[The Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare](#)

[Can Employers Withdraw Health Insurance During A Strike?](#), *Insurance Informant*

[California law subsidizes cost of health insurance for striking workers,](#)
Becker's Hospital Review

[Employer Health Insurance Now Costs \\$18,500 a Year — And You're](#)
[Paying More of It in 2026,](#) *Fizzty*

[Fewer Private- and Public-Sector Employers Offer Retiree Health](#)
[Benefits Than in the Past,](#) *EBRI*

Biography - Mark Dudzic

In honor of Labor Day, we're looking at the powerful connection between work and healthcare in America — and what it means for workers when their health coverage depends on their jobs.

Mark Dudzic is a longtime union organizer and labor activist. He served as president of Local 8-149 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (now part of the Steelworkers) and as president of the OCAW District 8 Council.

He is the former national organizer of the Labor Party.

In 2009, he co-founded the Labor Campaign for Single Payer Healthcare and currently serves as its chair.

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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