

# Racial Inequities in U.S. Healthcare:

Our Current System,  
The History of How we Got here,  
and How to move forward

Brought to you by:

**The Illinois Single-Payer Coalition (ISPC)**

With contributions from:

**Susan Rogers &  
Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP)**

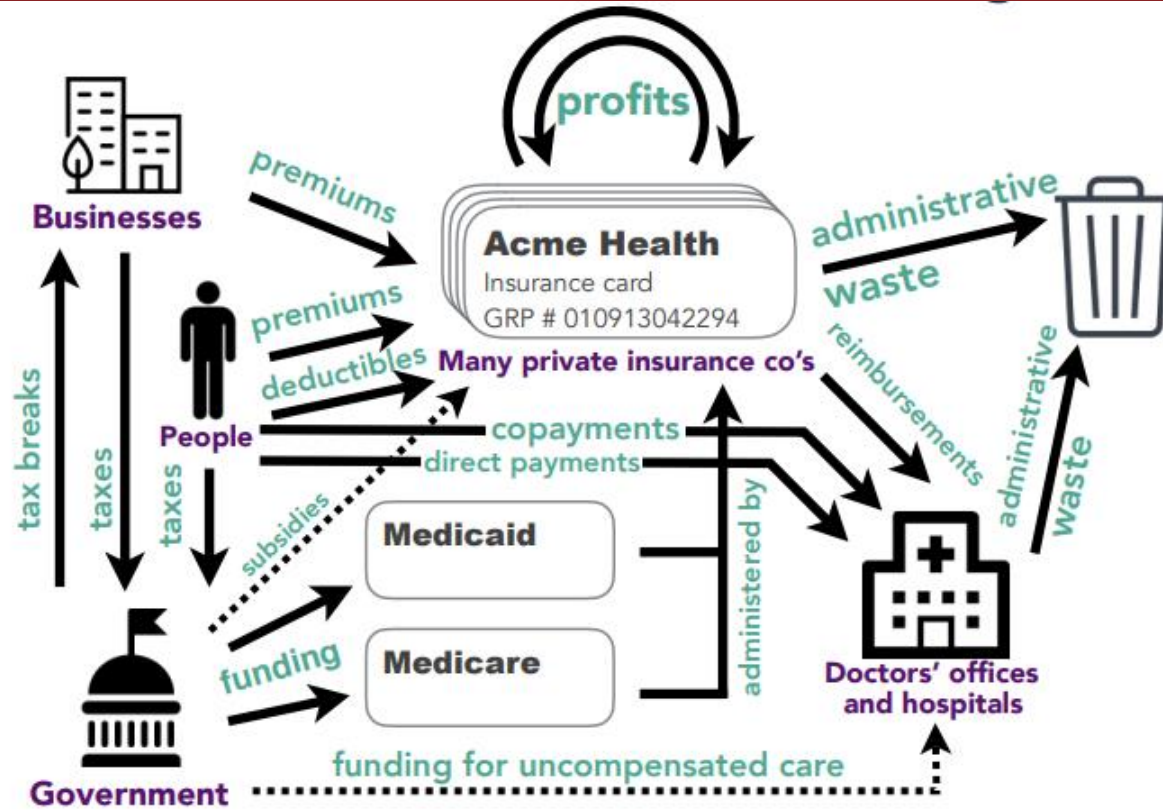


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**Our current healthcare system**

# Our Current Healthcare "System"



IT'S A MESS!



# The Hospital Hierarchy

- Different insurers reimburse at different levels

→ Medicaid pays the lowest

→ Medicare pays more

→ Private insurance pays the most

- Hospitals try to optimize their 'payer mix'

- Look for ways to attract wealthier, private insurance patients

- Community and public hospitals have far more uninsured and Medicaid patients.



NorthShore Evanston Hospital



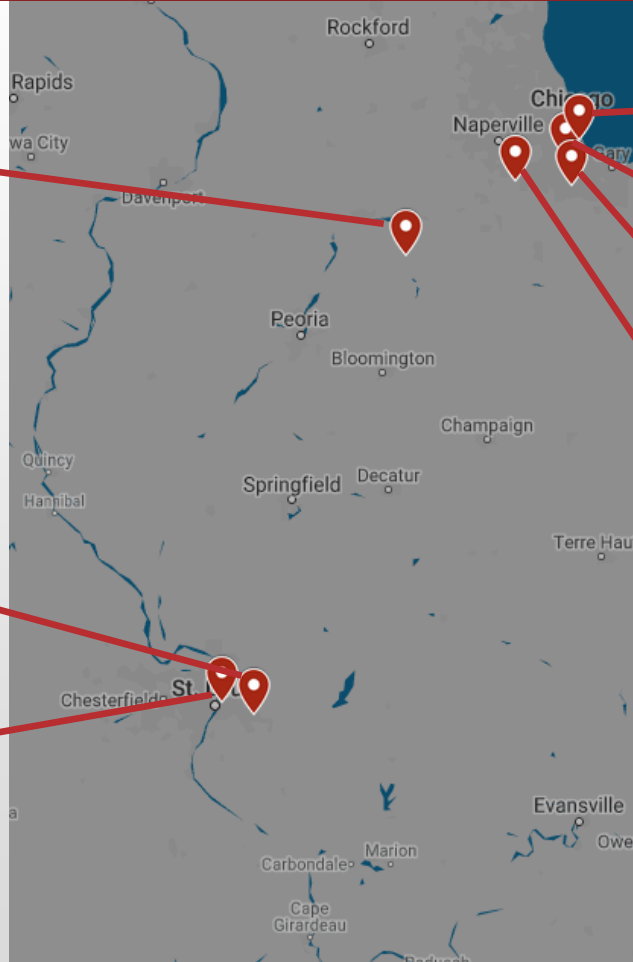
Mount Sinai, New York. M, K, Yee.

# Community and rural hospitals are closing...

St Mary's Hospital, Streator, 2015

St Elizabeth's, Belleville, 2015  
moved 7 miles NE to wealthier city O'Fallon

Kenneth Hall, East St Louis, 2011  
served the uninsured  
(4x more than the ntnl avg)



Jackson Park Hospital, Chicago, 2019  
closed its labor & delivery unit

MetroSouth, Blue Island, 2019  
40% of patients on Medicaid

Franciscan, Chicago Heights, 2018  
moved 5 miles west to wealthier Olympia Fields

Silver Cross, Joliet, 2012  
moved 3 miles N to wealthier city New Lenox

Note: This is not a complete list of hospital closures in Illinois.

# Medical Bankruptcy

- 67% of those filing bankruptcies attributed healthcare costs as a major factor.
- 70-80% of those had private insurance when they became ill.
- 57% of people who lost their homes to foreclosure identified medical debt as a major cause.



# Medical Bills during COVID-19

<b>Without Insurance</b>	<p><u>Danni Askini</u> Unenrolled in Medicaid because her husband got a new job (<i>and you must do that by law</i>). She got COVID-19 at the exact moment she was uninsured. Now she owes \$35,000. Video <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>With Insurance</b>	<p><u>Anne Bakjian, 40</u> Survived COVID-19 after a 2-week hospitalization. Weeks later she received a \$48,000 bill. Her insurer said her care hadn't been pre-approved.</p>
	<p><u>Nursing home employee in Washington state</u> After being promised testing would be free, she received a \$578 bill. Her insurer had covered \$7.</p>



# For-profit incentive in healthcare



**Robert Reich** ✓  
@RBReich

As Gilead charges \$3,120 for its COVID drug, remdesivir, remember that the drug was developed with a \$70,000,000 grant from the federal government paid for by American taxpayers.

Once again, Big Pharma is set to profit on the people's dime.

# U.S. Rankings in:

- Preventing deaths due to treatable conditions (out of 19 wealthy countries):

**19<sup>th</sup>**

- Mortality that could be prevented by good medical care:

**35<sup>th</sup>**

- Life expectancy:

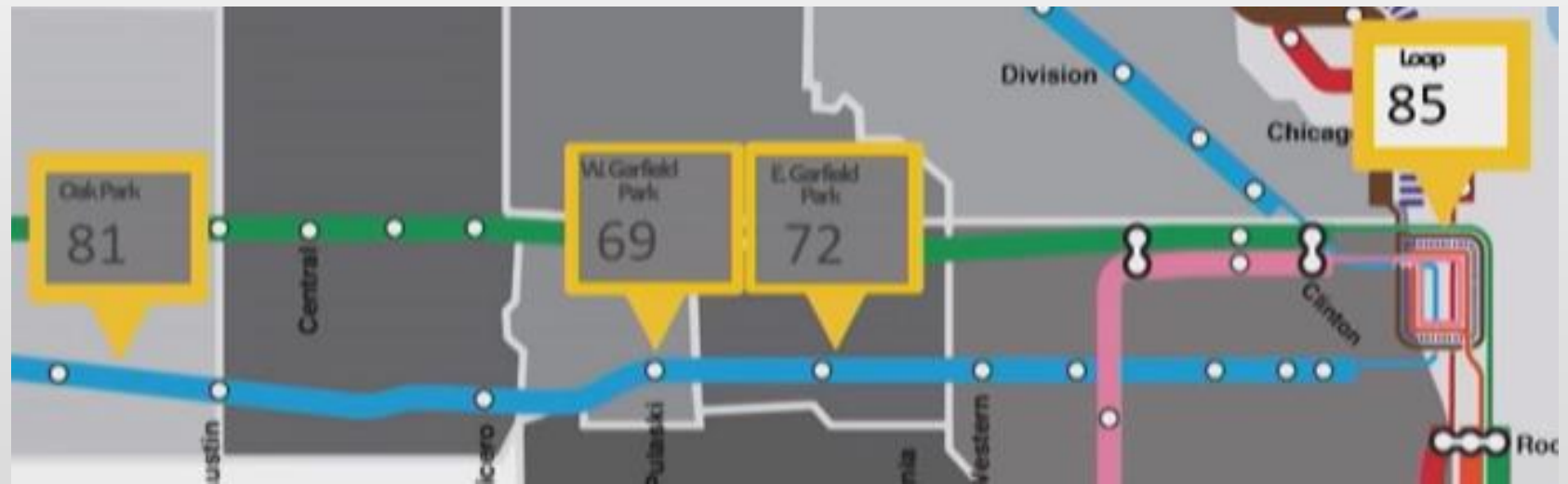
**25<sup>th</sup>**

# Inequities in outcomes...

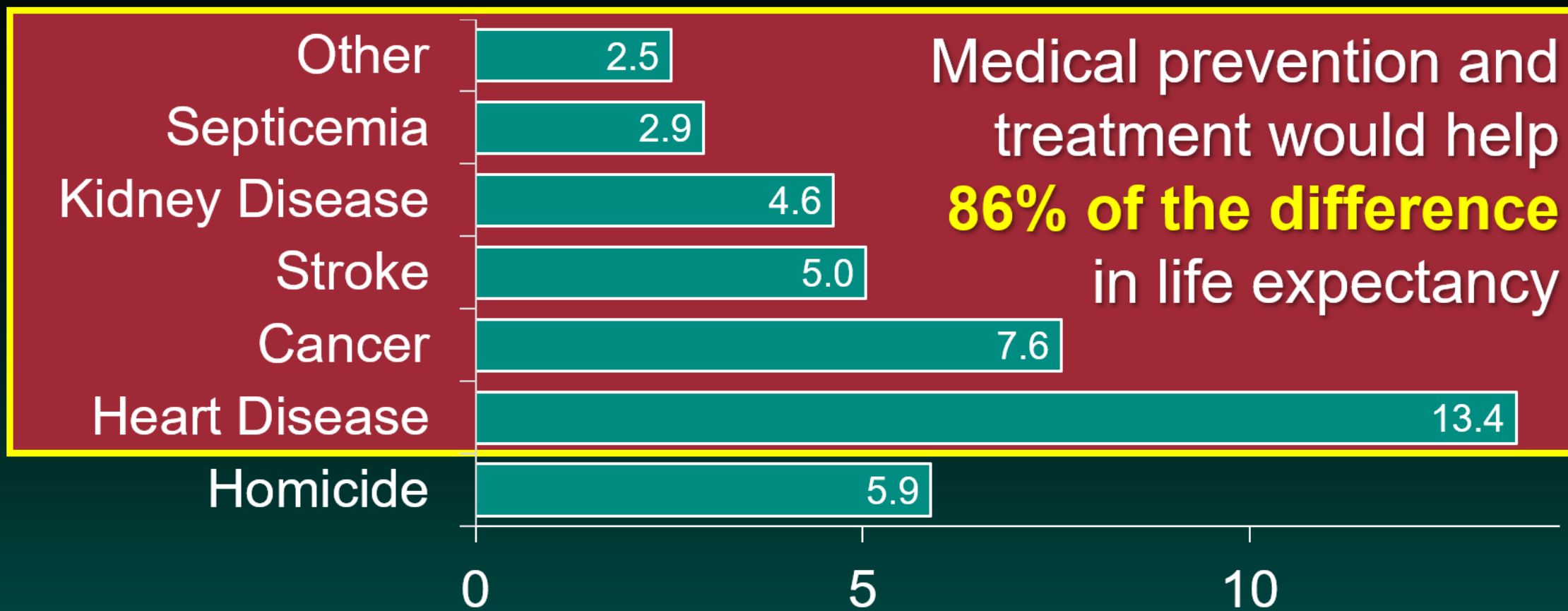
- We have significant inequities in outcomes.
- This isn't solely caused by the healthcare system, but certainly impacts health.
- And the healthcare system exacerbates these inequities.

*“Four more stops on the blue line and life expectancy plummets”*

– David Ansell



# Medical Conditions Shorten Black Lives



## Months of Adult Black Lives Lost as Compared to Whites

Ratios from MMWR May 2, 2017

Years assume a 3.5-year total difference for adults

Note: "Other" includes conditions (e.g., diabetes) for which Black death rates are higher and some (e.g., COPD, cirrhosis) for which Black death rates are lower.



# Inequities in outcomes in the U.S.

**Black people across Illinois are dying from COVID-19 at 3.4 times the rate of the white population**

**THE CHICAGO  
REPORTER**

*Investigating Race & Poverty Since 1972*

April 7, 2020

**In Illinois, Latinos have highest cases of coronavirus, and officials worry about a spike in deaths**

 **NEWS**

May 7, 2020



# Why is the system the way it is?

*(Spoiler: it's got a lot to do with racism & money)*

# 1600s-1800s

## Healthcare under slavery

- Healthcare provided, at times, as a matter to protect the slaveowner's labor
- Enslaved families took care of themselves
- Slaveowners tried to cure slaves themselves before sending them to the doctor
- Slave hospitals & slave cabins with awful conditions

Black people were seen as biologically different and inferior by the medical community

# Used for medical research

## Black people were used for medical teaching & research without consent

- **Dr Marion Sims**
  - considered the ‘father of modern gynecology’
  - ‘practiced’ gynecological procedures on young black women, without consent & anesthesia
  - performed 30 procedures on one woman alone
  
- **Tuskegee experiment conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS)**
  - 600 Black men signed up with the promise of free medical care
  - Many were not told they had syphilis, only that they had “bad blood”
  - As a result, many men unknowingly passed the disease to their wives and children
  - Penicillin became the recommended treatment in 1947
  - The study continued for another 2.5 decades after 1947. PHS officials wanted to continue until all participants had died.

# Forced sterilization

- Many states passed sterilization & eugenics laws in the early 1900s, which allowed physicians to sterilize people deemed unfit to reproduce
- Sterilization typically occurred without knowledge and consent
  - Women were deemed “promiscuous” or “feeble-minded”
  - Men were deemed “prone to crime”
- Targeted people of color

## Mississippi “Appendectomies”

60% of Black women in Sunflower County were sterilized without consent

## Native American Women

At least 24% of all Native American women sterilized in the 1970s

## California & Puerto Rico

Targeted Latino men and women.... “immigrants of an undesirable type”

# 1600s-1800s

- Early 1800s: treaties codified relationship between Native American tribes & federal government
  - In exchange for land, the U.S. government agreed to pay for health services of Native American tribes
- Interned to reservations → higher risk of disease
- Smallpox destroyed Native American villages
- Gov more concerned in counting those who died & estimating how many were left & where





# Hospitals: 1800s-1930s

## Hospitals were mostly private, non-profit

- Different ethnic groups cared for their own “deserving poor”
  - Irish Catholics had hospitals for Irish Catholics
  - Russian Jews had hospitals for Russian Jews
- Since hospitals were private, they had no restrictions
- Doctors could see – or not see – whoever they wanted
- The “non-deserving poor” (usually black people) were left to county facilities whose conditions were much worse

# After the Civil War...

## An ambivalence from white leaders on providing care

- Wanted formerly enslaved healthy enough to do labor
- But were fearful of a free and healthy black race
- Also worried about diseases spreading to their communities

## First federal healthcare program: Freedmen's Bureau

- This program epitomized this ambivalence
- Deployed 120 doctors to the South & opened 40 hospitals
- The program didn't listen to pleas for more personnel & equipment
- Most hospitals were quickly closed

# The 1930s....

## 1930s: Blue Cross started selling hospital & medical insurance

- Started as non-profit
- Mostly sold through employers
- Boosted during WWII as salaries were frozen. Gov said employer money used for healthcare wouldn't be taxed.
- By 1950, 50% of the population had employer-sponsored coverage
- Black people were denied most jobs that offered employer coverage

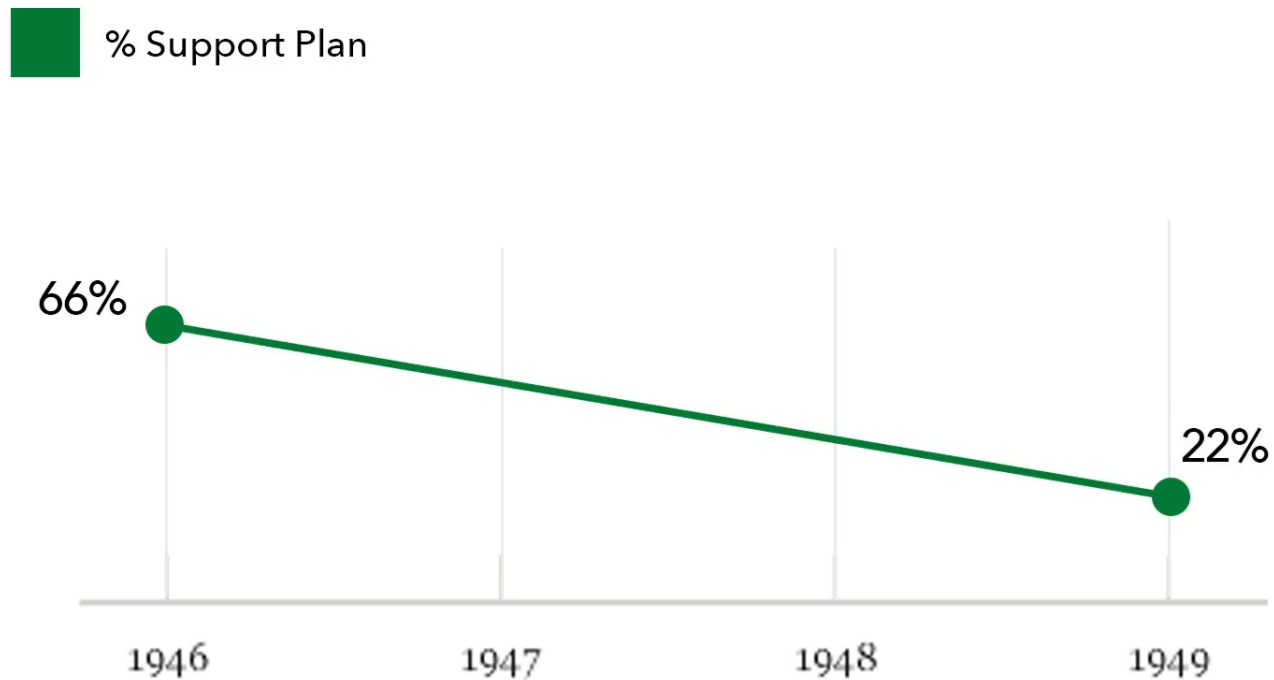


*The boss says over three hundred thousand companies have Blue Cross. We get the best!*



# The 1940s....

*Southerners' support for President Harry Truman's Health Insurance Plan*



National health insurance was very popular in the South in 1946.

Then it became associated with Civil Rights. The support for a national plan then plummeted.

# Passage of Medicare – The Good

- While employer-sponsored coverage flourished, the poor, elderly, and disabled were left out
- Medicare passed in 1965 to take care of the poor, elderly, and disabled



- Civil Rights Act passed 1964
- In order to receive federal funding, hospitals had to desegregate
- The federal purse proved powerful....
- Thousands of hospitals desegregated in 1965



# Passage of Medicare – And The Bad

## Medicare Part A

- Hospital coverage
- No premiums → considered mandatory insurance

## Medicare Part B

- Coverage for providers
- Requires premiums → considered voluntary insurance

### *Why is this significant?*

- Allowed doctors in the South to discriminate & refuse to care for black people
- This provision was lobbied into the bill by the Democratic South

# Passage of Medicare – And The Bad

## Medicare

Federally administered

## Medicaid

State administered

### *Why is this significant?*

- Allowed states to establish discriminatory eligibility requirements & determine where benefits offices were located
- Again, this provision was lobbied into the bill by the Democratic South

# Which leads to our current system...

- Many countries passed universal healthcare in the early 1900s.
- We weren't able to.
- In the meantime.....
  - Insurance companies realized they could make good money off people wanting health security
  - 1994: Blue Cross allowed franchises to become for-profit

# Which leads to our current system...







- Mix of private and public insurers.
- For-profit incentive in providing insurance and care.
- Significant healthcare inequities along income and racial lines.
  - 60% of those uninsured are people of color
  - Native Americans live 5.5 years less
  - Black maternal mortality 3x greater than white maternal mortality
- Why hasn't the system changed? Because of MONEY!!!
  - The players have become very rich and powerful and they don't want that to change!

# 5 of the top 15 industries that do the most lobbying are health related!



**\$714 million spent in healthcare lobbying in 2018**

# Insurance CEO's compensation, 2016

 <p><b>Michael Neidorff</b> Centene Annual Comp: \$32.2 M Pay/Day: \$123,225</p>	 <p><b>David Cordani</b> Cigna Annual Comp: \$21.9 M Pay/Day: \$84,017</p>	 <p><b>Mark Bertolini</b> Aetna Annual Comp: \$ 41.7M Pay/Day: \$159,647</p>
 <p><b>Steve Helmsley</b> United Annual Comp: \$31.3 M Pay/Day: \$119,918</p>	 <p><b>Joseph Swedish</b> Wellpoint Annual Comp: \$17.1 M Pay/Day: \$65,356</p>	 <p><b>Bruce Broussard</b> Humana Annual Comp: \$17.0M Pay/Day: \$65,208</p>

Median earnings of full-time wage workers in 2016: \$43,264

Head of CMS made \$165,000 in 2018

# Do we see racism in the universal healthcare debate today?



**Donald J. Trump** ✓  
@realDonaldTrump

All Democrats just raised their hands for giving millions of illegal aliens unlimited healthcare. How about taking care of American Citizens first!? That's the end of that race!

♡ 286K 7:37 PM - Jun 27, 2019

💬 118K people are talking about this

**ELEVEN 2020 DEMOCRATS BACK FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS**

**B BREITBART**

**Providing health insurance to illegal immigrants could cost up to \$23 billion a year, study finds**

**FOX NEWS**



# This is fear-mongering. And it is unfounded.

- Immigrants currently pay far more for healthcare than they receive in both private AND public insurance.
- Whenever you create eligibility requirements, you create unnecessary administrative burden to determine eligibility.
- It costs more to exclude people, than to include them!
- Healthcare providers don't want to determine who has documentation and who doesn't. They just want to provide care.
- Will we be scared again into thinking some people don't deserve care?

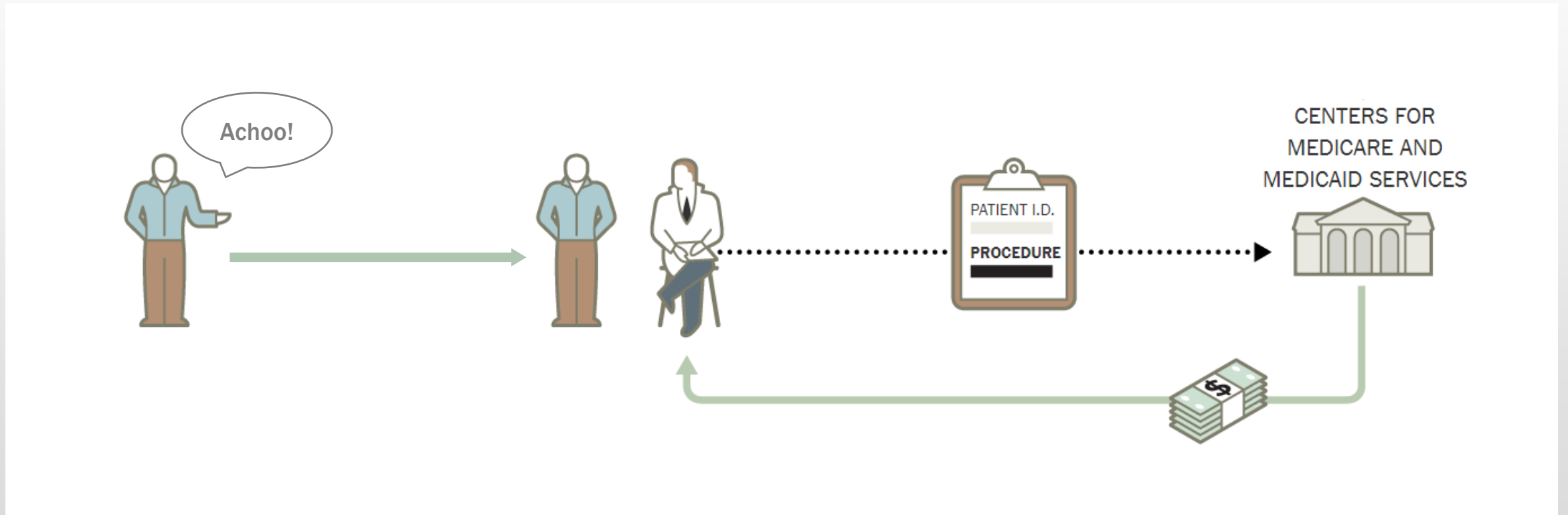
# Single Payer Healthcare

AKA - IMPROVED MEDICARE FOR ALL

# What is Single Payer?

- Covers everyone, from birth to death
- Comprehensive coverage, including payments to medical, preventive, dental, vision, hearing, long-term care, prescriptions, mental health, reproductive care
- No cost-sharing (i.e. no co-payments, no premiums, no deductibles)
- Paid for by one national payer, but care still provided by private institutions

# Single Payer: How it Works



# Benefits of Single Payer (SP)

- No medical bankruptcies
- Healthcare not tied to employment
- Lifts the burden of healthcare from employers & local municipalities
- Freedom to get care
- Care will be more equitable

# Single payer: what can and can't it do?

- **It can't....**

- Improve all social determinants of health (housing, food access, safety)
- Eliminate racial bias in medicine

- **It can....**

- Give everyone the ability to access care no matter job, income, age, or marital status
- Eliminate the incentive of providers to cater to the wealthy

# Universal Healthcare Means Racial Disparities Nearly Disappear

**Dialysis**

**Blacks live longer than whites**

**VA System**

**Blacks live longer than whites**

**Age 65+**

**Mortality rates quickly match across races**

Dialysis: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2601720/> Accessed Sept 30 2017

VA: <http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-health-racial-disparities-va-20150922-story.html>

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Key health problem:

# People of Color Are More Likely To Be Uninsured or Under-insured

## Public Option

✗ Public option plans are *not* universal and may still leave millions without coverage.

They do nothing to help people with expensive, low-quality private insurance that discourages the use of care.

## Medicare for All

✓ Medicare for All provides comprehensive, lifelong coverage for *everyone*, regardless of income, age, or employment.

Patients get the care they need without premiums, copays, or deductibles.



Key health problem:

# People of Color Are More Likely to Die From Preventable and Treatable Illnesses

## Public Option

✗ Many public option proposals require expensive copays and deductibles, which prevent patients from seeking timely care for health problems. A public option would do nothing to help those on high-cost, low-quality private or employer health plans that discourage care.

## Medicare for All

✓ Medicare for All allows everyone to get the care they need *when they need it*, by providing lifelong coverage for *all medically necessary care*, including preventive and primary care, prenatal and maternal care, dental, mental health, prescriptions, and long-term care.



Key health problem for minority and low-income communities:

# Fewer Healthcare Facilities; Existing Facilities Are Under-resourced and in Danger of Closing

## Public Option

✗ Public option plans do nothing to equalize funding or direct resources to underfunded facilities.

Many patients in low-income communities would still be uninsured, leaving hospitals and clinics to provide uncompensated care.

## Medicare for All

✓ Since Medicare for All covers everyone, providers and hospitals are compensated equally for patient care.

Medicare for All funds hospitals through global budgets based on *community needs* — not profits.



Key health problem:

# Racism Is Embedded In Our Healthcare Delivery System

## Public Option

**X** A public option leaves our fragmented health system in place.

It provides no resources to research or combat racial bias in the funding and delivery of care.

## Medicare for All

**✓** A publicly funded health system can invest in better research and data collection on racial inequity and provide training and education for health professionals to combat racial bias.



# Why Single Payer Medicare for All?



The establishment of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965, in conjunction with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, was transformative in desegregating the nation's health care system for patients and providers, and in improving access to care.

**What could Medicare for All do to improve the racial health inequities of today?**



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