



# Labor Healthcare News

A monthly digest from the  
**Labor Campaign for Single Payer**

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**January 20, 2025 – “Year in Review, Year Ahead” edition**

Hello Friend,

This newsletter is going out to union officials, staffers, and activists around the country. We know that you have to wrestle with the effects of the world’s most expensive and complex healthcare system on your union and your members. We hope that this will give you some information and tools to make that job a bit easier. Each month we’ll share important news items, ways to get further involved, special events, resources, etc.

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**[Organizers@LaborForSinglePayer.org](mailto:Organizers@LaborForSinglePayer.org)**

**Solidarity!**

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We have published combination December + January issues before, looking back as we look ahead, but these have been particularly meaningful times. With today's inauguration of Donald Trump, here are some top stories:

- The killing of a UnitedHealthcare CEO and the watershed public reaction
- Trump's second presidency, a GOP majority, and how these will affect labor + healthcare
- Labor developments: changing NLRB leadership; holiday strikes by [Amazon Labor Union-Teamsters](#) and [Starbucks Workers United](#) & more; the [SEIU rejoining AFL-CIO](#)
- Los Angeles fires and [how to help](#)
- The passing of President Jimmy Carter

Two days before we sent our last edition, United HealthCare CEO Brian Thompson was shot and killed in Manhattan. This caused a flurry of reaction both on and off-line; as facts were still coming in, we decided to not include the story nor make a statement. However, what was apparent was that healthcare and its impact on the working class were discussed more in the 24 hours after the shooting than it was in the entirety of the 2024 presidential campaign race. In the time since, and especially after a suspect was arrested, there have been countless articles, TV reports, and memes – this [New York Magazine subheadline](#) is concise: "A cold-blooded murder has become, to many, an opportunity to vent." Read more below.

*LaborNotes* has both a [2024 In Review](#) and a piece on [The Big Union Contract Fights Coming in 2025](#).

**Labor Community Services of Los Angeles has set up a [fire relief fund](#).** In partnership with the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, their ongoing mission is to "provide a safety net for union members, whether it be through the food program, disaster relief fund, or financial literacy."

Finally, we mark the passing of President Jimmy Carter, who died on December 29th at age 100. We honor his post-presidential years devoted to philanthropy and the pursuit of human rights and world peace.

However, [his presidency was marred by a number of actions](#) that presaged the anti-worker climate that was cemented in the Reagan years. Not least among them, Carter presided over the failure to enact an historic healthcare reform. He opposed the Kennedy National Health Insurance Bill which was endorsed by the AFL-CIO and almost the entire labor movement and proposed an anemic alternative that would have preserved private insurers and employment-based health coverage. [The UAW and several other unions refused to endorse him in the 1980 Democratic primaries because of his opposition to the Kennedy Bill.](#)

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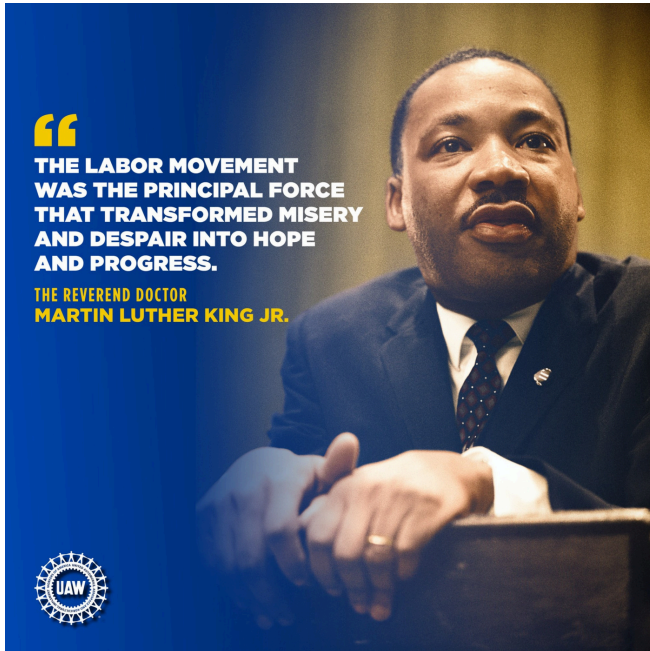
*Our funding comes from unions and individuals  
who believe that labor must lead the way  
for healthcare justice!*

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*As true and as timely as ever*

Each January we include a quote from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. which is often cited imprecisely as: "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." On this particular holiday honoring Rev. Dr. King, we're sharing the [full, accurate quote](#):

**"We are concerned about the constant use of federal funds to support this most notorious expression of segregation. Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health is the most shocking and the most inhuman because it often results in physical death. I see no alternative to direct action and creative nonviolence to raise the conscience of the nation."** – March 1966, at a press conference before speaking at the Medical Committee for Human Rights, in Chicago.

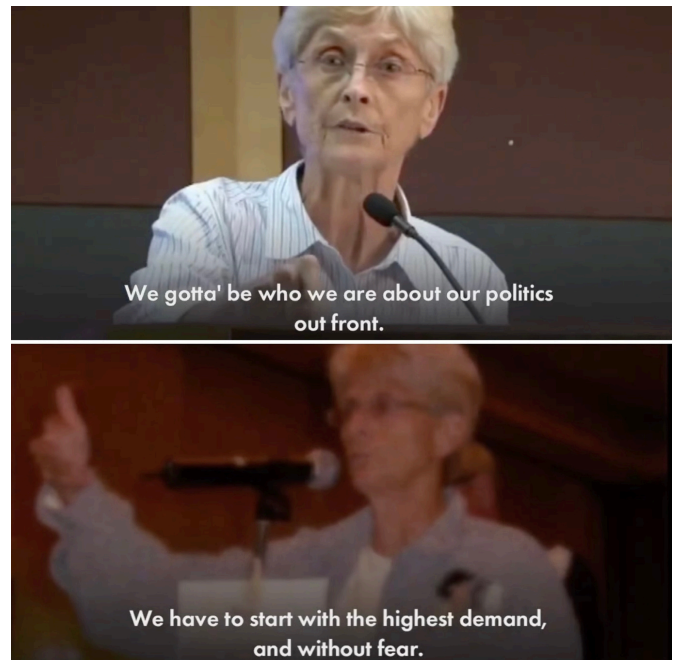
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### *In Memoriam – Nancy Wohlforth*

We lost one of our own on December 31st: Nancy Wohlforth, a pioneering labor leader and gay rights activist, passed away after a long illness. Her remarkable list of titles throughout her career included Secretary-Treasurer of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, Vice President of the California Labor Federation, and Founder and former President of Pride at Work – she was the first openly gay member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, and she co-founded U.S. Labor Against War.

A longtime leader in the health justice movement, she sat on the Labor Campaign for Single Payer's national advisory board.

*May her memory be a blessing.*



*[This 2018 video from Pride at Work](#) pays tribute to Nancy's dedicated history of advocacy*

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**News and Information:**

[Medical Debt will be Erased from Credit Reports for All Americans Under New Federal Rule](#) – *The 19th\**, Jan. 7, 2025

[Biden Declares Equal Rights Amendment Adopted, Sparking a Debate About His Abortion Legacy](#) – *Politico*, Jan. 17, 2025

[Trump's Win Could Accelerate the Privatization of Healthcare](#) – *NPR*, Nov. 7, 2024

[Trump's Return Puts Medicaid on the Chopping Block](#) – *KFF Health News*, Jan. 13, 2025

[Xavier Becerra Reflects on Tenure as Health & Human Services Secretary: 'We're leaving this country healthier and stronger.'](#) – *Scripps News*, Jan. 17, 2025

[Trump Transition Puts Up Guardrails Around \[HHS Secretary pick\] RFK Jr.](#) – *Politico*, Jan. 15, 2025

[Biden's outgoing Secretary of Labor] [Julie Su is Still Optimistic About the Future of Labor](#) – *In These Times*, Jan. 9, 2025

[What to Know About Lori Chavez-DeRemer, Trump's Pick for Labor Secretary](#) – *Associated Press*, Nov. 22, 2024

[Manchin, Sinema Prevent Democrats from Locking in Majority on Labor Board through 2026](#) – *Associated Press*, Dec. 11, 2024

[ABC News Anchor Rebuked for Claiming Popular, Cost-Saving Medicare for All Won't Happen](#) – *Common Dreams*, Dec. 9, 2024

New landmark polling data from *Gallup News*:

- [View of U.S. Healthcare Quality Declines to 24-Year Low](#) – Dec. 6, 2024
- [More in U.S. See Health Coverage as Government Responsibility](#) – Dec. 9, 2024

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## News and Information (cont'd):

As for addressing threats to healthcare and labor – beyond [AFL-CIO's excellent primer on Project 2025 and Unions](#) – we'll be gathering resources, but for now here are two pieces from *LaborNotes*:

- [Dark Clouds Gather at the National Labor Relations Board](#) – Jan. 7, 2025
- [Want to Defend Immigrant Workers in Your Contract? Here are Some Suggestions](#) – Jan. 16, 2025

## Reactions to UnitedHealthcare CEO Killing:

[A Mass Movement Can Beat Health CEO Greed](#) – Jacobin, Dec. 11, 2024

**Bernie Sanders:** "The outpouring of anger at the insurance companies, is a reflection of how people feel about the current health care system. It is broken. It is cruel. Sixty thousand people a year die because they don't get to a doctor when they should. [...] It's not only that our life expectancy is lower than virtually every other wealthy country, it's that if you are working-class, you're going to live five to ten years shorter than people who are wealthy."

[Healthcare is a Right: CEO's Killing Ignites Calls for Reform Amid Trump's Plan to Privatize Medicare](#) – Democracy Now!, Dec. 10, 2024

[The Human Toll of For-Profit Insurance](#) – MotherJones, Dec. 16, 2024 [*editor: this is an interview with Dr. Ed Weisbart, National Board Secretary of Physicians for a National Health Program, an ally organization*]

[Luigi Mangione, UnitedHealthcare, and the American Health Care Scam](#) – Rolling Stone, Dec. 22, 2024 [*editor: Timothy Faust is the author of the excellent [Health Justice Now: Single Payer and What Comes Next](#) (2019)*]

[The Semi-Sad State of Consumer Protection in Healthcare](#) – KFF, Jan. 7, 2025

"It's not likely that we are at a tipping point on consumer protection in health care, despite a hot news cycle just before the holidays, which rediscovered public angst about health insurance [...] The reality is that there is little prospect of significant consumer protection legislation in Congress with the Trump administration and Republicans opposed to regulation [...] The news media did not over-hype the underlying frustration with the complexity and cost of health care [...] but it did sometimes conflate an outburst [...] with the potential for policy change."

## Our Ongoing Mission

Every time workers negotiate a contract, our health benefits are a target. The boss wants us to pay more, get less coverage, and give up more wage increases.

It doesn't have to be that way. Through an improved "Medicare for All" we can take healthcare off the table and guarantee workers comprehensive benefits including:

- **medical**
- **dental**
- **vision**
- **hearing**
- **mental health**
- **reproductive health**
- **long-term care**

All with no out-of-pocket costs!

Workers can have healthcare through a single public system, so employers will have less leverage, and we can have the freedom to change jobs and the power to bargain for higher wages, better pensions, the hours we need, and other improvements in working conditions.

Medicare for All means that wealthy corporations could no longer routinely strip their front-line workers' health insurance as their first tactic during strikes. Our collective organizing will not be up against businesses determined to avoid the cost of union benefit health plans, and unions can focus on other key economic improvements and providing supplemental benefits.

No one likes their health *insurance* company; we like the familiarity of our trusted *providers* and the security of our coverage. Under single payer, we would have complete choice of provider, without worry of losing our doctor or getting stuck with surprise charges. Prescription drug costs will be lower, and we'll get the prescriptions our doctor orders — not just the ones insurance pays for. No "pre-authorization," no premiums.

Single Payer Healthcare / "Medicare for All" would provide everyone in the U.S. with the healthcare we need and deserve; not "access," but guaranteed healthcare. All without co-pays, deductibles, out-of-network expenses, or denial of coverage — in fact, you would never get a bill.

**If all that sounds too good to be true, it's because for-profit insurance companies, corporate hospital chains and prescription drug companies have spent billions from our premiums to buy political influence, shape the media stories, and deceive us.**

***Labor Healthcare News*** will help set the record straight.

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## Resources:

- [Form a Union](#) and [Project 2025 and Unions](#) – AFL-CIO
- [How Labor Can Fight Fascism](#) – *The Forge*
- [Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee](#)
- [Our Video / toolkit](#): It's a Workers' Issue: Abortion Access and the Right to Healthcare
- [Our Video / toolkit](#): Taking Healthcare Off the Books
- [Health System Tracker: Access and Affordability](#) – Peterson-KFF

## Single Payer Savings Calculator:

As Union members and organizers, we are a force for change in the healthcare industry. We know what it's like to have to bargain and negotiate for the basic human right of healthcare, and we know what it takes to create an equitable system. Let's end the fight, now. Learn how much an improved and expanded Medicare for All could save you: [calculator.passmedicareforall.org](https://calculator.passmedicareforall.org)

You could save \$4,752 per year when Medicare for All is passed!

What you pay now:  
**\$4,950 per year**

Includes premiums you pay (\$2,700), your share of employer-paid premiums (\$0), out-of-pocket (\$2,250) and long-term care (\$0)



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## UNIONS SUPPORTING SINGLE PAYER:

