



# Universal Healthcare and Health Justice

**Health is a Human Right—Not a Luxury**

## The Challenge

Despite decades of debate and partial reforms, America's healthcare system remains one of the most expensive—and inequitable—in the world. Tens of millions of Americans are uninsured or underinsured. Costs are soaring. Mental health services are stretched thin. Entire communities face provider shortages, while medical debt pushes families to the brink.

Our system too often treats illness after it occurs, rather than creating the conditions for health to flourish. It prioritizes profit over prevention, complexity over clarity, and short-term fixes over long-term equity.

## Why This Matters in 2026

Healthcare is not just a policy topic—it's a daily reality for every American. It affects whether parents can afford to take their child to the doctor, whether small businesses can provide coverage, and whether seniors can access life-saving medications.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare what's at stake: that public health is national security, and an unhealthy nation is an unstable one. As we approach a milestone election and the 250th anniversary of our democracy, the time for vague promises is over. We need a citizen-driven movement to reimagine healthcare—not as a privilege for some, but as a foundation for a flourishing, equitable society.

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## The Reality We Must Confront

- **35 million Americans** remain uninsured; millions more have insurance that doesn't cover their needs.
- **Medical debt** is the leading cause of bankruptcy in the U.S.
- The U.S. spends **more per capita on healthcare** than any other country, yet ranks poorly in outcomes like life expectancy, infant mortality, and chronic disease.

- **Rural communities** face severe provider shortages, while urban hospitals buckle under pressure.
  - The Affordable Care Act improved access but left major gaps—especially in states that failed to expand Medicaid.
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## What's at Stake If We Don't Act

If healthcare reform stalls, Americans will continue to:

- Face unaffordable premiums and high deductibles
  - Lose coverage during job transitions or economic downturns
  - Experience preventable deaths due to delayed care
  - Watch health spending consume federal and state budgets with diminishing returns
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## What Project 2026 Believes

**Healthcare is a public good.** Like clean water or public safety, access to care is essential for national strength and individual dignity. The role of the healthcare system must be to improve lives, reduce suffering, and protect the most vulnerable—not to preserve a fragmented status quo.

**Citizens are central to the solution.** A functioning healthcare system is not the responsibility of Washington alone. It requires collaboration across government, private industry, non-profits, and, most importantly, an engaged citizenry. Project 2026 supports a participatory approach where Americans are empowered to shape the healthcare systems that serve them.

**Constructive dialogue is the way forward.** We reject the hyper-partisan noise that turns healthcare into a wedge issue. Americans are problem solvers. By promoting honest debate, accurate information, and solution-oriented discussion, we can find common ground on reforms that make sense and save lives.

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## Policy Considerations for 2026

- **Universal Coverage:** Should we pursue a single-payer system like “Medicare for All,” or expand access through a public option?
  - **Cost Transparency:** How do we eliminate price gouging in drug and hospital billing?
  - **Preventive and Community Health:** Can we invest in wellness, nutrition, and early intervention rather than waiting for crisis care?
  - **Mental Health and Addiction:** How do we ensure mental health services are funded, accessible, and culturally competent?
  - **Spending Smarter:** Can we reduce national healthcare costs while improving outcomes—and address the national debt at the same time?
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## Your Role in the 2026 Election

Healthcare decisions should not be made behind closed doors. The 2026 election is your opportunity to demand clarity, accountability, and action.

### What You Can Do

- ✓ Ask candidates direct, specific questions about their healthcare plans—beyond slogans
  - ✓ Attend forums, debates, and town halls armed with facts from the ***Citizen Toolbox***
  - ✓ Join a local coalition advocating for affordable, accessible healthcare
  - ✓ Share your healthcare story—because personal experience is powerful civic evidence
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## A Call to Action

The goal of providing quality, affordable healthcare to every American is too important to be lost in partisan bickering or corporate lobbying. We need a new model—one that works for the people, not just the system.

At *Project 2026*, we believe that a healthier future starts with a stronger democracy. That's why we're putting healthcare at the center of the national conversation in 2026—because the kind of healthcare system we build reflects the kind of nation we want to become.

👉 **What kind of healthcare system do you want for the future? The power to shape it is in your hands.**

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 **Citizens' Health Care Working Group**

 **Congress: Examining Pathways to Universal Health Coverage**

**Universal Health care insurance for all Americans**