



HIP HOP CAUCUS

HIP HOP CAUCUS POSITION STATEMENT ON HEAL+H CARE 🏠:

Statement:

From Prenatal Care to End of Life Care, every single person is going to see a doctor. Having access to quality healthcare will determine how often you will need to see a doctor throughout your life. Healthcare along with the economy has been a primer issue in just about every election since 2008. But it goes back even further throughout the entirety of American political history as an issue to varying degrees. From the establishment of the Veterans Health Care services to calls for Universal Healthcare from Presidents as far back as Theodore Roosevelt to the passage of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 better known as Obamacare under President Barack Obama. Healthcare doesn't just begin and end at Doctor visits and physicals though. Mental Health, Vision, Dental, Prescription Drugs, federal agencies like the CDC, FDA, HHS are all part of the American healthcare system and need to be included when it comes to this conversation. So does the staffing of our healthcare system as the community is consistently underrepresented throughout the field of medicine especially in the higher ranks but also even at the ground level of the doctors making the decisions. Until everyone gets the healthcare they deserve, our work will not be finished.

The Hip Hop Caucus believes that the United States of America should have a Universal Healthcare system. There is no way that the richest, most powerful country in the world shouldn't cover every single citizen with the right to healthcare. The Affordable Care Act, Obamacare has basically created a system that is a vast improvement that bans caps,, increases coverage for lower income families and makes sustainable healthcare possible for those who would otherwise not have access to it because they aged out of their parents health insurance system. We want to see this go further. We want to see all 50 states take the Medicaid expansion. We want to see a public healthcare insurance option added to the Affordable Care Act created that can compete with private healthcare insurance companies to lower the cost. We need to make sure we are dealing with the issues within our healthcare system, making sure that racist, trans/homophobic, and gender bias are not continued in our system. We need to work to bring about equality and equity in our system because in the end we are all humans in need of care and should be treated as such in accordance with the hippocratic oath our doctors take.

At A Glance:

- There should be a Universal Single Payer Health Care system for everyone in the richest country in the world
- We believe in a whole life healthcare that covers all aspects of the whole person
- We believe that that Black Maternity Rates should be a major focus to help lower birth mortality rates
- We believe in reproductive justice and in the right to choose whether to carry a pregnancy to term and be properly educated about all options
- We believe in age appropriate, fully inclusive, consent driven sexual health education that teaches acceptance and understanding of one's own self and others.
- The battle against HIV/AIDS is not over and we are not stopping the fight
- We support building and modernize our health infrastructure beyond its current strength so it is prepared for 21st century challenges
- Capping prescription drug costs for consumers and allowing medicare to negotiate these prices and penalize bad actors for overcharging.
- We must attack the core of mental health issues in the community including racism, homo/trans/xenophobia

Hip Hop Caucus Bold Policy Positions:

- Pass legislation to create a Universal Single Payer Health Care system nationwide
- Expand CHIP Program to cover every single child under 18

Hip Hop Caucus Pragmatic/Incremental Positions:

- Continue the subsidies created to improve cost for the Affordable Care Act
- Create a federal [Public Option](#) and allow [states](#) to do the same
- End of life decision making processes put in place for everyone
- Removing the ban on Blood Donations from MSM men
- Pass the [Protect Black Women and Girls Act](#)
- Lower the cost of [prescription drugs](#) across the board or allow [foreign importation](#) from Canada
- Lift the ban on condoms in prison and provide medical information about PrEP to prevent transmission of HIV/STIs.

Hip Hop Caucus positions we don't support:

- Block Grant Programs that send the same amount of money to Iowa as you send to California
- National Ban on Abortion

Hip Hop Caucus False Solutions we don't supports:

Deep Dive:

Universal Healthcare

The Hip Hop Caucus believes in a comprehensive approach where Healthcare is intrinsically intertwined with the future of this community. We believe healthcare is a [right not a privilege](#) and believe we should go as far as making it explicitly clear that healthcare among other rights should be [enshrined in our constitution](#) where possible. Our community is the first and the worst affected when it comes to any kind of healthcare crisis and we need to be at the front of the line in preventive care services. As we have seen especially during the heart of the recent coronavirus pandemic the community was ravaged from both misinformation and bad outcomes due to the ball being dropped and politicized especially in the states where most of our populations live, especially in the South and Midwest.

The Hip Hop Caucus supports the creation of a single payer universal healthcare system for the United States of America so that we can join the rest of the world in caring for our people. In the richest nation in the world EVERY American should have the right to visit a doctor, receive care irregardless to financial or employment status. We support legislation that has been [introduced](#) which would allow the state based universal health care programs as well. At a minimum the Hip Hop Caucus would support the creation of a [public health care insurance option](#) which can compete with private health insurance prices to provide more affordable health insurance.

No one knows the importance of medical healthcare yet is the most underserved and underutilized than the African American community. According to [Pfizer in 2017](#), 89% of Black Americans had health care coverage compared to 93% of white Americans; 44% of African Americans had government health insurance that year. Yet and still, 12% of African Americans under the age of 65 reported having no health care coverage that year. A lot of these communities that are without hospital access are in rural areas. The Hip Hop Caucus supports the continued expansion of [telehealth options](#) when it comes to medicine.

Expansion of Health Care

The Hip Hop Caucus believes that we should [fully fund and permanently extend the CHIP Program](#). We would support expanding it to universal coverage for every single child under the age of 18. A Medicare for Kids program because no child should be without health coverage. This in conjunction with Obamacare's expansion to allow young adults to remain on their parents insurance will make sure everyone under the age of 26 and over the age of 65 is completely covered with health insurance. We support legislation that sets a bare minimum [guaranteeing](#) that insurance companies are giving the best possible access to care. We also demand that access to [healthcare is equally and equitably](#) provided. We also support legislation

that would make current health care insurance plans [more affordable for lower income families](#) so that they are not hurt with the rising cost of healthcare services today.

[12 states mostly across the South and Midwest](#) have yet to take the Medicare Expansion which would cover Americans up to 138% of the federal poverty line. Most of which have the largest Black and Brown communities and the worst health outcomes in the nation. The Hip Hop Caucus supports Medicare Expansion especially in states like Georgia, North Carolina and Wisconsin. Expansion would bring billions of dollars into the states that haven't yet taken advantage of the funds. These states especially with large rural areas have hospitals shuttering due to lack of funding. You can't possibly get the best care when it's 2 hours away. This would also help to [modernize](#) and build the necessary infrastructure that is needed especially in the hardest hit areas in city cores and rural areas as well as native communities that were hit hardest during the COVID-19 pandemic due to being under-resourced.

Black Maternal Health

These types of disparities start from the beginning. According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), "Black women are three times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than White women. Multiple factors contribute to these disparities, such as variation in quality healthcare, underlying chronic conditions, structural racism, and implicit bias." The Hip Hop Caucus has supported the work done by Illinois Congresswoman Lauren Underwood and her efforts to address Black Maternal Health issues. We support her legislation [Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act of 2021](#). We also applaud the [President and Congress](#) for moving the first piece of legislation attached to this package, the [Protect Moms Who Served Act of 2021](#). We also support legislation that would make it possible to be respectful of different cultures and their [maternal delivery methods](#).

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Justice

The Hip Hop Caucus is a strong believer in the right to choose as it has been shown time and again to [affect the lives of African American lives](#) especially in the states where abortion access has been sharply curtailed since the Dobbs decision overturning Roe. We believe in reproductive rights and support the codification of the [Roe & Casey precedences into law](#). We also support the codification of Griswold v. Connecticut guaranteeing the right to contraceptives and all of methods contraception including but not limited to condoms, birth control pills, Plan B and medical abortion pills.

Hip Hop Caucus also supports the [full freedom of movement for people seeking an abortion and having to travel for abortion services](#) and banning [federally any limitations on the possession, sale, purchase, transportation or use of any contraceptive](#). We support the right to in vitro fertilization to help those facing difficulties in conceiving and [fully age appropriate fully](#)

[comprehensive and inclusive sexual education classes](#). We also believe that all health insurances should cover infertility treatments and reproductive surrogacy services to help those interested in having children but are not physically able. The Hip Hop Caucus stands completely opposed to a state or federal ban of the right to an abortion.

HIV/AIDS

The Hip Hop community has a long reach back in battle against HIV/AIDS having lost many friends and family like [Eazy-E, Fela Kuti, Kenny Greene and others](#). The Hip Hop Caucus supports legislation to truly reengage in the fight against HIV/AIDS. As HIV/AIDS has become more and more manageable for the white community, it remains on course to harm more Black and Brown people. We support the continued fight against HIV/AIDS and thank the administration for restarting the [Office of National AIDS Policy](#) and diversifying the presidential advisory committee on HIV/AIDS that is reflective of the various communities that are affected by HIV/AIDS. But the problem remains still that by 2030 the viral load in the White community will plateau and begin to fall. The viral load of the Black and Brown community will continue to increase to the point where according to some reports 1 in every 2 African American men who sleep with men will become HIV positive in their lifetime.

Over the course of the COVID pandemic the eyes of the medical community have only further been distracted from the work around HIV. It's time we take the same energy towards HIV as we took to COVID and as we take to Cancer, Alzheimers and other diseases. We support passage of [PrEP Access and Coverage Act](#) and the [HIV Epidemic Loan-Repayment Program Act of 2021](#) so that life sustaining medications are not withheld because of one's lack of financial resources.

We also need to make sure the resources are directed into areas where HIV is still increasing and while doing so make sure that those resources are put into organizations that not only work in those communities but are also led by those communities that they serve as they did prior to George W. Bush administration. We support changes to the Ryan White and Minority HIV/AIDS programs and other programs that would redirect funds to Black-led organizations working to help the Black community instead of the current standard of organizations helping out in Black communities.

The Hip Hop Caucus calls upon the administration and Congress as well as the Department of Health and Human Services to [end of the ban](#) on blood donations from gay men. We are currently facing a national blood shortage and we have an entire community that would willingly donate, [yet not be able to even though the science has caught up since the ban was put in place back in 1983](#).

Mental Health

One major thing we learned from COVID-19 and the time afterwards is that mental health is of the utmost importance. With over a million Americans having lost their lives in the past two years alone just to COVID, and the uprisings that occurred across America in 2020, the mental stress on the community and around the world is greater than ever. Polls across the nation show that the amount of mental stress over the course of the previous five years has been constantly rising. Amongst the youth it's getting even worse. This is leading to the rise in violence at home, in schools, and in the streets. We need to take a whole of government approach towards repairing the mental health of this nation just as we need to build our physical healthcare infrastructure.

The Hip Hop Caucus supports legislation to tackle these problems:

[S. 631 COVID-19 Mental Health Research Act](#)

[S.1390 The Youth Mental Health Services Act](#)

[S. 708 Preventing Mental Health and Substance Use Crises During Emergencies Act](#)

We have to also work on why these mental health issues exist at their root cause and have open and honest conversations about these issues especially the issue of race. Racism has been shown to cause psychological issues on those who are oppressed minorities. It's time we name it in federal law. [H.Res. 344](#) declaring Racism as a public health crisis starts that process. We need to make it clear where this nation stands and pass the [Anti-Racism in Public Health Act](#).

The Hip Hop Caucus also takes a firm stance against the rampant rise of anti-Trans legislation coming around the nation, especially in states across the South. The Hip Hop Caucus believes that #TransLivesMatter and deserve to be protected. Hip Hop Caucus also takes a stance against and supports the ban of [Conversion Therapy](#). The Hip Hop Caucus stands strongly against the bans on hormone blocking medications and treating parents as child abusers for helping their children transition as the state of Texas has legislated.

Prescription Drugs

The Hip Hop Caucus supports lowering the cost of prescription drugs. We have to stop the continued growth of drug prices. The Hip Hop Caucus supports putting a [cap on drug prices](#) especially for drugs like Insulin which helps to treat Diabetes. This medication should be free or at cost, but we support capping this vital drug's pricing at [\\$35 a month](#). We support allowing [Medicare to negotiate](#) the cost of all prescription drugs and also to monitor and approve the [price increases on life saving medication](#) or allow for the [foreign importation of safe drugs](#). We also support [penalizing companies](#) for explosive drug costs when all they are doing is padding their pockets while people are forced to choose life or death because of their financial ability. We support the [Affordable Medication Act](#).

Medical Professional Shortage

As America continues to age we are going to need more medical professionals. We absolutely have to have more doctors and nurses than ever as we face a silver wave that is going to stress our system in ways that it hasn't been before the heights of the COVID pandemic. One of the best ways to help alleviate the crush is making it easier to hire more by producing more and making it easier for them to afford school. [Make full-time health care practitioners eligible for public service loan forgiveness](#). We need more Black Doctors and Registered Nurse Practitioners. A major cause of health problems in the Black community come from the fact that the medical system has a history of being distrusted by the Black community because of events of the past. We need to make sure that we put funding into higher education institutions and [prioritize HBCUs and other institutions](#) that produce minority students for medical programs so we can produce more medical professionals from the community to treat the community and build trust within the community.

Vaccinations and Pandemics

The last two years has been a time where the nation's health system has been faced with the strongest challenge that it has faced in nearly a century. Medical programs have been stretched to their max and hospital shortages ravaged the nation during the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic. As things change with our climate, more and more viruses that have been locked under ice for thousands of years are going to be [unleashed from their icy slumber](#). We need to redouble our public health efforts and learn from the experience of the last two years and grow from that experience. We need to greatly fund and expand our system so that never again can we be overwhelmed in this way again especially as diseases that had been defeated have begun to [reemerge](#). The Hip Hop Caucus believes that we need to push back hard and make it very clear that medical science works and that the best way to prevent and exterminate diseases is to get vaccinated. The Hip Hop Caucus also takes a firm stance against the politicization of health and a stance against a lot of the disinformation that has been spread in many circles of the internet including those that [misdirect historical facts](#) to sensationalize and mislead our people today.