



American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO

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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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Universal Healthcare: A Basic Human Right

APWU supports Medicare for All, which would guarantee the right of healthcare to all.

The American healthcare system is profoundly broken. Today, amid the COVID-19 crisis, nearly 100 million people lack health insurance or cannot afford their deductibles or co-pays. As millions of people lost their jobs during the pandemic, so too did they lose their health insurance directly tied to employment. The ongoing public health crisis has only laid bare the cruelty of our healthcare system, which has killed over half a million Americans and left millions more without healthcare.

America's for-profit healthcare system has been broken long before the pandemic. In 2019, we spent \$3.8 trillion on healthcare--far more than countries with a universal healthcare system, like Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands. Even though we spend significantly more on healthcare than any developed nation, Americans have some of the worst health outcomes of those nations. At the same time, medical debt is the leading cause of bankruptcy in America. That is outrageous. Congress must act to guarantee healthcare coverage for all and implement a single-payer, Medicare-For-All system.

Countries that guarantee health care as a human right do so through a "single payer" system, which replaces the thousands of for-profit health insurance companies with a public, universal plan. Implementing a single-payer Medicare-For-All system will significantly improve healthcare outcomes and, also, will

potentially save us \$1.1 trillion by reducing senseless and excessive insurance-related administrative costs. The United States is the only country in the developed world that does not guarantee access to basic health care for residents. It is time for this to change. The APWU adopted a Medicare for All resolution at the 2018 National Convention because we believe healthcare is a human right.

By implementing a system under which all healthcare revenue goes into a single public fund that pays for all medical services, a singlepayer system would:

- Guarantee the same coverage for all, regardless of employment status or wealth
- End healthcare-related personal bankruptcies
- Improve public health
- Reduce healthcare spending

The APWU is proud to stand with the Labor Campaign for Single Payer and has long supported a shift away from the private health insurance market to a government-run program.

The APWU will continue to support legislation that provides affordable and adequate single-payer healthcare coverage for all.

The Medicare for All Act of 2021 (H.R. 1976)

Sponsored by Representatives Pramila Jayapal (WA-07) and Debbie Dingell (MI-12)

APWU urges members of Congress to stand up for universal healthcare and co-sponsor important legislation to cover all Americans. Representatives Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell introduced the Medicare for All Act of 2021 in the House on March 17, 2021. This legislation has yet to be introduced in the Senate.

The goal of this bill is to ensure that all Americans will have access to the highest quality and most cost-effective healthcare services regardless of their employment, income, or healthcare status. In short, this bill would codify into law the moral truth that healthcare is a human right. If signed into law, the bill would:

- Guarantee quality healthcare for all Americans through expanded Medicare program.
- Provide comprehensive health care coverage including all primary care, hospital and outpatient services, dental, vision, audiology, women's reproductive health services, maternity and newborn care, long-term services and supports, prescription drugs, mental health and substance abuse treatment, laboratory and diagnostic services, ambulatory services, and more.
- Ensure that, upon receiving care, patients would not be charged any co-pays or other out-of-pocket costs.
- Allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices to substantially lower the costs of prescriptions drugs.
- Preserve the ability of veterans to receive their medical benefits and services through the Veterans Administration, and of Native Americans to receive their medical benefits and services through the Indian Health Service.

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