

MISSION

To educate and mobilize League members to work toward legislation and other reforms that enact the goals of our LWVUS health care position, with a strong focus on [expanded and improved Medicare for All \(a single-payer system\)](#).

Vax versus anti-vax: Individual and population perspectives

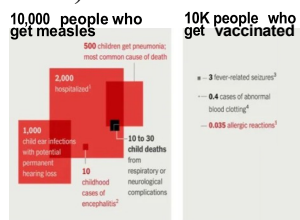
Partisan polarization infects health care with the same rancor seen in political discussions around matters like taxes and immigration. It makes what should be a core truth (all people should have access to health care) into a [partisan topic](#). During the COVID pandemic, rejection of the novel vaccines and precautions like masks split largely along party lines. Now, the rejection of the measles vaccine, currently in the spotlight because of [unprecedented outbreaks](#) of the very contagious virus, is found among both conservatives and progressives.

Secretary of HHS RFKJr's distrust of vaccines is well-known. Less expected is fervent support for his campaign to "Make America Healthy Again" from the so-called "[MAHA Moms](#)." Physician and columnist Leana Wen was unnerved that there were mothers—a category she herself belongs to — who actively reject measles vaccine, thus posing a health threat at both the individual and population levels. [To gain insight](#) into MAHA Moms' motivations, Wen visited their online forums, probed the social media of "momfluencers," and conducted dozens of interviews.

Two of the subgroups she identified occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum. As expected, religious conservatives were concerned with their "medical freedom" and were distrustful of government in general, saying, for example, "the perils of infectious diseases are overblown," and "vaccine injury is not being taken seriously." By contrast, Wen also found a subgroup of left-leaning "crunchy" moms who —like herself — favor organic, unprocessed food, and aggressively avoid toxic chemicals in toys and cleaning products. They pride themselves on doing their own research and prefer more natural ways to build immunity than vaccines.

As a group, the "MAHA Moms" exemplify "**Identity**

Protective Cognition" described by Yale law professor J. Kahan in "[Politics Makes Us Stupid](#)." (See our [Sept 2023 newsletter](#).) It is adaptive, he claims, for us to resist factual information that threatens our sense of ourselves.



He and his colleagues showed experimentally that people who interpreted data accurately in a low-stakes argument — in their example, evaluating the effect of a skin cream — rejected interpretations of data if they threatened their core values

and/or membership in their "tribe." Wen found both conservatives and progressives among MAHA moms with core values that led them to override the facts, like those in graph, based on years of data collection. From a health perspective for an individual child, the [comparison of adverse events from measles vaccine](#) compared to having the disease strongly favors vaccine. The tiny black square and tinier dot in the right box show that "vaccine injury" is technically zero: 3 in 10,000 cases of seizures, and many fewer cases of abnormal blood clotting, or allergic reactions. The red interlocking boxes on the left show a statistical probability of 3 in 100 expected serious complications such as encephalitis, loss of hearing, pneumonia, or other hospitalizations (including 3 deaths in a thousand) from getting measles.

This calculation of measles side-effects completely ignores the public-health benefits of the vaccine — the [elimination of the threat](#) to the general public that national vaccination rates over 90% achieved in the U.S. by 2000, with the last death in 2003. Public health decisions are not made on an individual basis. As [international comparisons](#) by Chinhuei Chi show, they represent a collective desire for a just society, antithetical to the anti-vax movement.

Newsletter
Staff:
Barbara Pearson & Candy Birch

Attendees

CA — Jon Li
CO — Barbara Dungey
CO — Elaine Branjord
CO — Marilyn Ayers
FL — Candy Birch

KS — Linda Johnson
MA — Barbara Pearson
MI — Maria Woloson
NY — Gay Canough
NY — Alberta Roman

NC — Margaret Villani
NC — Rob Luisana
NC — Wayne Hale
VT — Eduardo Siquera
VT — Jean Hopkins

VT — MaryAlice Bisbee
VA — Stephanie Lowenhaupt
WA — Mo Brinck-Lund
WA — MaryLynne Courtney
WA — Alan and Voki Unell



In Case You Missed It

Mar. 14 YouTube aired Mass Care video "[How US Insurance Works](#)"

Mar. 23 HCR4US meeting [video](#) and [audio](#) and [supplementary materials](#) with Action Links

Mar. 23 NC Piedmont Raging Gran- nies sing "[Congress: Do Your Job](#)"

Apr. 10 Meet Jamie YouTube Pro- gram "[Trump and Medicare: Ad- vantage Plans BOOSTED for 2026](#)"

Apr. 10 LWVUS comments [Opposing HHS' Proposal to Prohibit DACA Re- cipients from Enrolling in ACA Health Insurance Coverage](#)

Apr. 12 PBS News Weekend "[Why patients are getting hit with surprise hospital fees for routine medical care](#)"

Websites

HCR4US Toolkit:

<https://lwwhealthcarereform.org>

HCR4US Youtube Channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
LWVHealthCareReform](https://www.youtube.com/c/LWVHealthCareReform)

HCR4US Mtg Minutes:

<https://tinyurl.com/HCR4US-Minutes-etc>

HCR4US Web-Contact Form:

tinyurl.com/Contact-LWV-HCR-4US

Password protected directory

Networking

One Payer States

<https://www.onepayerstates.org/>

National Single Payer

<https://nationalsinglepayer.com/>

Healthcare Advocacy on Substack

[Here's the link.](#)

Physicians for a National Health Program

<https://pnhp.org/>

Students for a Nat'l Health Program (SNaHP)

<https://www.facebook.com/snhp1/>

Center for Medicare Advocacy

<https://www.MedicareAvocacy.org>

National Nurses United

<https://www.nationalnursesunited.org>

Medicare for All Resolutions

<https://www.medicare4allresolutions.org>

Poor Peoples Campaign

<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org>

ADD YOUR GROUP [HERE](#)

Braver Angels

Seeking a path out of our "bubbles"

Progressives and conservatives in the U.S. (the "libtards" and "magats") experience intense mutual disrespect in public discourse on a daily basis. Research by the Pew Charitable Trust confirms that the polarization underlying this overt antagonism became [more pronounced after the 2016 election](#), and is now further sharpened by our entrenched two-party system. At the policy level, parties exploit "closed" primaries where they need very few votes to weed out opposing viewpoints. In 2024, for example, [87% of our Congress](#), was elected by 7% of eligible voters, on average, who show up for primaries conducted within party lines (as opposed to "open"). In this way, a small minority of zealots have voted in unpopular policies that have many fierce enemies.

At the personal level, the resulting [differences between sides](#) seem so wide and discussion so acrimonious that many families found they could no longer even celebrate holidays together, cutting people off from those they loved.

To create a basis for greater understanding and empathy across the divide, [two friends got together](#) and came up with a formula for bringing together people who had voted for different candidates. It has since developed into a nationwide organization. Harking back to Lincoln's "Better Angels of our Nature," **Braver Angels** creates a [safe space for moderated discussions](#) of issues where deep listening and respectful speech are enforced. [People use their turns](#), not in order to change the others' minds, but to explain why they hold the opinions they do. The listener refrains from challenging the speaker directly. Both sides are looking for pockets of common ground.

Today, Braver Angels offers a constant flow of in-person and virtual [workshops, debates, and other events](#) following their principles. In many communities, their programming is the only venue where "red-leaning and "blue-leaning" people are in the same spaces, a necessary step for finding a path across the divide.

Since it's explicitly not a goal, it is rare for people to change their minds at Braver Angels events which leads many people to experience the sessions as frustrating and unsettling. Still, it does appear to lower the volume and dial back the name-calling to a point where opponents might find common ground. Do you know of other alternatives to staying in our "bubbles," moving further apart?

Take Action — Send a Letter



US Senator Bernie Sanders and Representatives. Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell are reintroducing their companion Medicare for All bills into Congress on April 29. The more

cosponsors there are on the Medicare for All Act, the more power we demonstrate as a movement. Complete this [form](#) to send a letter to your US Representative and your US Senators to urge them to sign on as cosponsors to Medicare for All as soon as possible.

Article Archive

Recent Articles of Interest Related to Healthcare Reform

Hold down the CTRL key and click on the hyperlinks to access the articles.

Please send us articles (citation and/or pdf) through the [Google Group](#).

Jan. 22, 2025 [GoBankingRates.com](#)

“Mark Cuban Wants To Reshape Healthcare — 5 Ways His Approach Could Save Americans Money”

Mark Cuban thinks there’s another way. The billionaire entrepreneur is making waves with a surprisingly simple approach to fixing America’s healthcare mess.

Mar. 8, 2025 [Center for Medicare Advocacy](#)

“Improvements to Medicare Advantage Oversight and Consumer Protections Must Be Preserved and Expanded”

By David Lipschutz

The Biden Administration made progress in improving access to care for Medicare Advantage enrollees with improvements in important oversight and consumer protection measures. The fate of those improvement will be determined by the new Trump Administration.

Mar. 21, 2025 [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

“Why Most States Will Not Replace Federal Medicaid Cuts”

By Drew Altman

Medicaid is already the second largest item in most state budgets, which are required to balance their budgets, and covering rising health costs which outpace inflation would “lead to cuts in other state programs... such as corrections, environmental protection, social services, transportation, education or higher education, or possibly force some states to raise taxes.”

..Mar. 25, 2025 [Chartis 2025 Medicare Advantage Competitive Enrollment Report](#)

This full report analyzes changes in the Medicare Advantage market which continues to grow but at a slower rate. Other areas include Special Needs Plan enrollment, plan options and preferences, dominant players, quality ratings, and reaction to recent market disruption a summary of which is presented in “[New Report: Medicare Advantage Market Growth Continues Despite Headwinds](#)”

Apr. 11, 2025 [Becker’s Hospital Review](#)

“CMS Floats 2.4% Inpatient Pay Bump for Hospitals in 2026: 9 Things to Know”

By Alan Condon

The proposal will increase hospital and long-term care hospital payments. Other changes include reporting for acute care hospitals, Medicare Advantage, and total hip/knee arthroplasty risk adjustments.

Upcoming Events

April 24 12:00 p.m. ET

KFF webinar “[Understanding Fraud and Abuse in Medicaid](#)” Three experts join Health Wonk Shop series moderator Larry Levitt in an hour-long discussion designed to unpack claims about fraud and abuse and put them in a larger context. Register [here](#).

April 29 U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders and Reps. Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell are reintroducing their companion Medicare for All bills to Congress..

May 14 12:00—4:30 p.m. ET [2025 National Voices of Medicare Summit: Allies, Advocacy, Action](#) presented via Live Webcast Learn more and register [here](#).