

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](#).

Kindness v. Cruelty and Hate?? (Hint: Always Choose Kindness)

In their expanding empire, ICE detention centers — hastily thrown up with [minimal oversight](#) and little provision for basic sanitation, nutrition, or exercise — are designed for maximal ill-health. They are woefully understaffed and lead unsurprisingly to an explosion of cruel and inhuman treatments, such as excessive [solitary confinement](#), within them.

Comprehensive documentation with ICE's own slap-dash data attests to the cruelty underlying their implementation. Ample evidence has also established that [guards in such facilities suffer](#) from adverse mental and physical outcomes at higher rates. Our current enforcers seem not to recognize the physical, mental, and legal threats they pose for themselves when they remove basic protections for those they guard. Health and legal hazards associated with dehumanizing others are hazards for everyone, including them. [History is full of examples](#) showing that you cannot dehumanize others without losing your own humanity.

The other side of that coin is that when you do acts of kindness, they too are contagious. Those who commit them are the [first to experience their physical, mental, and community health benefits](#). We improve our own internal and external environments while doing so for those around us.

As generations of children learned from [Mr. Rogers](#), [intentional kindness](#) in words and deeds is habit-forming. Just [thinking and talking positively](#) about what we hope for ourselves and for others promotes empathy and compassion — and a willingness to devote our resources to others. There are formal and informal programs building a base of knowledge about why and how to develop the "kindness effect" to combat the hate that licenses cruelty.

There is a scientific basis for the benefits of kindness. It [activates the vagus](#) or "nerve of compassion." Among its many other functions, the vagus nerve

reduces heart rate, lowers anxiety by lowering cortisol levels, and stimulates immune functions. It strengthens the receptor network for oxytocin, the neurotransmitter involved in trust and maternal bonding (the "cuddle hormone"), which is part of the nervous system that may have [evolved to promote empathy](#), social connectedness, and a sense of engagement in life.



You may have heard of the custom of paying for the coffee of the person behind you in line, or "[loving-kindness meditation](#)" promoted by the American Heart Association (and the [Kindr Foundation](#),

[RandomActsofKindness.org](#) and a host of other organizations it is tempting to dismiss as "too touchy-feely.") There are also studies that quantify the benefits of kindness to inform the fight against hate. [Scientific American](#) advises "Forget survival of the fittest; it's kindness that counts." The [Bedari Kindness Institute](#) at UCLA reports numbers of studies in the U.S. and abroad that provide evidence of the impact of programs, like toolkits for teaching [school-based kindness](#) or [reduction of hate-speech](#). The [City of Davis and Yolo County](#) in conjunction with the University of Davis is an example of putting money and infrastructure into a community-wide framework to combat local hate incidents and prioritize the well-being and safety of its residents. Being "hate-free together" is not rocket science, but [it benefits from our intentionality](#) in doing familiar micro-kindnesses such as complimenting the first 3 people you see, giving a friend an unexpected gift, or letting someone cut ahead of you in the grocery line.

Appreciation for the power of kindness is widespread. Well-respected political scholar, [Timothy Synder](#), devoted a recent column to the urgent need for kindness even in the incredibly dire situation of armed conflict; The [Dalai Lama](#) says: "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." We should not make the mistake of ignoring any opportunity for it. *Submitted by B. Pearson*

Newsletter

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Vaccine Updates: FL Removal of Vaccine Mandates; CDC ACIP Confusion

In recent years, under the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida law has banned [cultivated meat](#), [recreational marijuana](#) and [abortion after six weeks](#), Medicaid expansion, and most recently [fluoride](#) from public water.

[Joseph Ladapo](#), who DeSantis appointed as Surgeon General and who officially denounced the use of

[COVID19 MRNA vaccines](#). in 2023, announced this month his intention to [remove all vaccine mandates](#) in the state, saying "Who am I as a government or anyone else, who am I as a man standing here now, to tell you what you should put in your body? Who am I to tell you what your child should put in [their] body? I don't have that right."

Organizations such as [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), and [National Medical Association](#) have strenuously disagreed.

[CNN reported](#): Ladapo's potent derision of vaccine mandates sparked a near-instant deluge of [reaction](#) and vigorous disagreement, including from [infectious disease experts](#).

Dr. Zachary Rubin, a double board-certified [pediatrician](#) specializing in immunology and allergy treatment, said in a Substack [post](#) that Ladapo's words are "a calculated move in the ongoing politicization of public health. The reality is that vaccines are not shackles, they are shields. Vaccines have eradicated smallpox, nearly eliminated polio in most of the

world, and saved millions of lives annually. To suggest otherwise isn't just irresponsible; it's dangerous." Almost immediately, pharmacies in Florida began [withholding or revising vaccination services](#), and many patients were finding it difficult to find pharmacies that were administering the COVID 19 update. Many were required to obtain a doctor's

prescription to get the vaccines if they were available at all. Many wondered if insurance companies will cover vaccines that are not mandated. However, "AHIP — the national health insurance industry trade association — says [insurers won't halt payments for vaccinations any time soon](#)."

"Health plans are committed to maintaining and ensuring affordable access to vaccines.

Health plan coverage decisions for immunizations are grounded in each plan's ongoing, rigorous review of scientific and clinical evidence, and continual evaluation of multiple sources of data. Health plans will continue to cover all ACIP-recommended immunizations that were recommended as of September 1, 2025, including updated formulations of the COVID-19 and influenza vaccines, with no cost-sharing for patients through the end of 2026."

The Sept. 18-19 CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices meeting adjourned without recommending the COVID vaccine which supports Ladapo's position, but it did postpone recommending the Hepatitis B vaccine at birth. *Submitted by C. Birch*



In Case You Missed It

Aug. 24 — HCR4US meeting [video](#) and [audio](#) and [supplementary materials](#) with Action Links

Aug. 27 — Center for Medicare Advocacy hosted "How New Health Care Cuts and Policies Impact You." View the recording [here](#).

Sept 9 — The Washington Post hosted "[How AI Could Transform the Future of Medicine](#)" featuring Matt Murray, David Jay, and Akilah Johnson

Upcoming

Oct. 1 5:00 p.m. ET — University of Florida Right Care Alliance presents "Protecting Our Community: The Power of Vaccines & the Need for Mandates" featuring former CDC ACIP member Dr. Paul Offit. In person or register for Zoom [here](#).

Websites

HCR4US Toolkit:

<https://lwvhealthcarereform.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

League Update Newsletter Sign Up:

[https://www.lwv.org/league-management/
league-update-newsletter-sign](https://www.lwv.org/league-management/league-update-newsletter-sign)

Article Archive

Recent Articles of Interest Related to Healthcare Reform

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

August 20, 2025

KFF

"How Will the 2025 Reconciliation Law Affect the Uninsured Rate in Each State?"

By Alice Burns, Jared Ortaliza, Justin Lo, Matthew Rae, Cynthia Cox

"About half (49%) of the 14.2 million more people who would be uninsured in this scenario live in California (1.7M), Florida (1.5M), Texas (1.4M), New York (860k), Illinois (520k).

August 30, 2025

The New England Journal of Medicine

"The Corporation Deal — Health Care, Investors, and the Profit Priority"

By Amitabh Chandra and Mark Shepard

Health Justice Monitor commenter says: "The article in its entirety represents how some in the academic community fail to realize precisely what is wrong with our current health care system, and fail to proffer meaningful solutions to its vast deficiencies." What do you think?

Sept 11, 2025

The American Prospect

"The Coming Crisis in Health Care and the Crisis We Already Have:

Why We Can't Put Humpty Dumpty Back Together Again"

By Damon Silver

"It is possible to live longer than we do as a nation and pay between 50 and 75 percent less to do so. And pretty much every other developed country is doing just that, including all the larger English-speaking open societies Americans feel closest to: the U.K., Australia, and Canada. What stands in our way? We all know it's the political power of insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and hospitals.

Sept 12, 2025

Becker's Clinical Leadership

"US progress on chronic disease mortality stalling: What to know"

By Elizabeth Gregerson

"While noncommunicable disease mortality declined in all high-income western countries between 2010 and 2019, the U.S. experienced the smallest decline."

Sept. 17, 2025

Fierce Healthcare

"John Hopkins, UnitedHealthcare Officially End Talks After Failing to Come to Terms on New Contract"

Kim Hoppe, VP of PR, states that Johns Hopkins Medicine was negotiating its contract with United so that it could "avoid aggressive claim denials that delay necessary care, excessive red tape that forces patients to wait for treatments, and significant payment delays that strain our ability to provide care. We will not sign a contract that allows an insurance company to put profits over patients' health and well-being,"

The Power of Music

Make your action more memorable with this short list of music resources!

- Poor People's Campaign Songbook, "[We Rise: A Movement Songbook](#)." (words and videos)
- Songs of Freedom and Struggle [People's Music Network](#)
- [Jesse Welles](#) young singer with a guitar, steps into the protest tradition, couple of songs on United Health
- [Tesla Flash Mob](#) YouTube

- [HCR4US Toolkit](#) See Resources for videos of songs
- [Raging Grannies](#) has a database of songs
- [National Single Payer Toolkit](#) has lyrics on page 22ff, a little more health care oriented

