

COVID-19 and frontline health care workers: Talk radio call-in sample scripts

*Radio call-in shows reach a **large and loyal audience**, especially locally, and represent a great opportunity to advocate for single-payer reform. Consider calling in during a COVID-19 update, or during a segment dedicated to health care. **Keep your initial comment short** (the host may cut you off) but be prepared to engage further if given the opportunity.*



General message

Hi, I just wanted pay tribute to all of the brave health care workers who are putting themselves in harm's way to treat people with COVID-19. They're doing an incredible job, but the rest of us aren't doing nearly enough to support them. Too many of these workers don't have paid sick leave or even basic health coverage. To fix this, we're going to need strong unions, public pressure on corporate health institutions, and improved Medicare for All.

Message as a physician

Hi, I'm Doctor [NAME] and I wanted to pay tribute to the incredible doctors, nurses, home health aides, and support staff who are risking their lives every day to fight COVID-19. Unfortunately, a lot of these workers don't have what *everybody* needs: paid sick leave, decent wages, and even basic health insurance. If we really value their contributions, we should pass Medicare for All and support strong unions to protect these workers.

Additional discussion points

- Hundreds of health care workers have died from COVID-19, which is hundreds more than in Canada, or most other countries with national health systems.
- Almost 4 million frontline health care workers are older or suffer from chronic health conditions like diabetes that can make COVID-19 even deadlier.
- More than 600,000 health care workers live below the poverty line, which makes it harder for them to protect their families through quarantine or to pay for medically necessary care.
- Black and Latinx health care workers are especially burdened with poverty wages and lack of benefits, which is yet another example of systemic racism.
- Most nursing homes—especially for-profit facilities—pay their workers poorly and fail to provide paid sick leave or decent health coverage. This is dangerous for workers and patients alike.
- Hospitals and health facilities have been laying off and furloughing workers since COVID began. But the commercial health insurance industry has lost almost zero jobs. Why isn't it the other way around?
- Hospitals have had to compete with one another to secure personal protective equipment. A national health system could ramp up production and send PPE wherever it's most needed.
- Public health departments are a shell of their former selves. We need to double public health spending to fight this pandemic, and the next public health crisis.