

How to ask a candidate a health care question

At most debates and candidate forums, audience members have **less than 20 seconds to ask a question**. How do you form a question that will both make the case for Medicare for All and force the candidates to explain how their health care plan would work? Use this guide to help you formulate and fine-tune your question.

Steps	Key questions	Example	Your turn
Step 1: Decide what are you trying to say	Ask yourself: 1) What is the point I am trying to make? 2) How can I make that point in the form of a question?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point: Single payer saves lives Point: This candidate does not support Medicare for All Point: Our district needs Medicare for All 	
Step 2: Make sure your question is tailored to the person(s) you are speaking to	Do your research! What are the most important health issues facing your district? What are the candidates' positions on single payer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our district has the second highest rate of maternal mortality in the state Candidate X promises to improve maternal health but does not support single payer 	
Step 3: Make sure your question brings in the audience as well	Who will be in the audience? How can you get the audience on your side?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not sure of single-payer support Consider the location/forum sponsor: i.e., senior center, chamber of commerce, youth group, etc. 	
Step 4: Make sure your question is personal to YOU	What is unique about YOUR story? How can you use your voice as a physician?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I've been a health care worker in this district for over 20 years Stories of patients who couldn't access care 	
Step 5: Eliminate unnecessary words	Remove words or phrases that add nothing to your question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wasteful words: almost, sort of, seemed, slightly, kind of, a little, "Is it possible that...?" 	

Your question

(continued)

Worksheet: Scenarios and forming a question

Scenario 1

You're a health care worker and a local candidate is coming to a health care workers forum to "congratulate our heroes." This official has yet to support Medicare for All, and believes that "Americans want choice."

Your turn

Scenario 2

You're a 3rd year medical student stressed about exams, thinking about your future, and the increased pressure on students to "do it all." You have a candidate coming to give a talk to your class; they don't support single payer, and warn that doctors will flee the country if we implement this kind of system.

Your turn

Scenario 3

You're a resident of your district, active in your local community and helping a youth group. Your Representative supports Medicare for All, but doesn't even have a page on their website where they discuss health care. You're surrounded by "red" districts, and because your district is purple, your Representative has been very hesitant to speak about their support. They are coming to your local youth group to give a talk to the students about their futures. You have an opportunity, as their instructor, to ask a question.

Your turn