



Health Care

Discussion Guide

Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so listen and be prepared to hear a different point of view. Remember, you do not need to share your political affiliation; this is a discussion and exchange of ideas, not politics.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
 - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
 - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- In 2020, [Americans spent \\$4.1 trillion](#) on healthcare — \$12,530 per person and 19.7% of GDP. This means that, adjusted for inflation, per capita medical costs in the U.S. are over 30 times higher than they were 90 years ago.
- The [U.S. government contributed half of the \\$4.1 trillion](#) spent on healthcare in 2020. The federal government contributed 36% of spending, and state and local governments accounted for 14%.
- More Americans than ever have [access to health insurance](#), but an estimated 30 million were uninsured in 2020.

Let's discuss

Below are 3 questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** Is there a right to healthcare? If so, what is the best way to secure that right?
- **Government:** Are individuals or the government better equipped to make healthcare decisions?
- **Business:** How would businesses differ if employers did not offer healthcare coverage?

Let's act

1. **Take it local. Talk to your neighbors** to identify the status of healthcare issues in your community. Identify opportunities to work with other community members in your area.
2. **Explore the impact of healthcare and healthcare laws in your community.** Search on your state or municipality's website for your local Department of Health using keywords such as "healthcare" or "department of health." You can also search for healthcare in your state on [Ballotpedia](#). See how your state is implementing the ACA and related Medicaid expansions with the [NCSL's tracker](#).
3. **Investigate community programs in your state or municipality** at [HealthyPeople.gov](#) or by exploring initiatives offered by your local hospitals and healthcare facilities.
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on healthcare law, and their vision for how to tackle healthcare challenges facing Americans and your community. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on the ACA in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [Aging in the 21st Century](#)
 - [Entitlements](#)
 - [The Opioid Epidemic](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.