



# Healthcare

## 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 be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **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

*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?

### Let's discuss

*Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.*

- In your opinion, what is the priority in regards to healthcare?
- Were there some points with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there a perspective that was missing?
- Is there a right to healthcare? If so, what is the best way to secure that right?
- Are individuals or the government better equipped to make healthcare decisions?
- Which should be a higher priority for policymakers? Increasing insurance coverage rates, controlling healthcare costs, or improving the quality of medicine?
- How have changes in the healthcare marketplace affected you and your family? What changes would you like to see made?

# Let's act

## Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share

- More than 90% of the [medicine being practiced today](#) did not exist in 1950.
- In 1930, Americans spent \$2.8 billion on healthcare, or \$23 per person. In 2018, [that figure was \\$3.6 trillion](#) —\$11,172 per person and 17.7% of GDP.
- Approximately 49% of Americans get their [health insurance through their employers](#) as of the most recent data, from 2017.
- An MRI of the lower back [costs](#) about \$140 at an imaging center in Louisiana but costs over \$7600 at a center in California.
- In 2017, the government, consumers, and insurers spent \$333 billion on [prescription drugs](#).
- Whereas only 40% of small companies with fewer than 25 employees [offer health insurance](#), 97% of companies with over 100 employees offer coverage.
- More Americans than ever have [access to health insurance](#), but an estimated 44 million people were underinsured in 2018, up from 29 million in 2010.

## Engage Locally

- *Learn more*
  - **Research your elected representatives' positions** on healthcare, and their vision for how to tackle healthcare challenges facing Americans and your community.
    - Your legislators, state comptroller, attorney general and other local elected officials want to know their constituents. Write to them about your interest in healthcare.
    - 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.
  - **Explore the impact of healthcare policy 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](#).
    - Investigate the healthcare marketplace in your state at [Healthcare.gov](#).
    - See how your state is implementing the ACA and related Medicaid expansions with [the NCSL's tracker](#)
- *Reach out*
  - Explore what organizations, legislators, and journalists you could contact to ask questions, learn more and get engaged.
  - If you have trouble finding the information you are looking for on your municipality's website, consider contacting agency or department heads. You can find the contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#).
  - The Policy Circle offers a number of resources for engaging on the local level. Learn how to write a letter to the editor on [The Policy Circle website](#).
  - 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](#).

## Post a Recap/Dive Deeper

- Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present. 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? This brief is part of several [Conversation Series](#), including Five that Impact Your Wallet and Five for 2020. Other related briefs include:
  - [The Opioid Epidemic](#)
  - [Aging in the 21st Century](#)
  - [Entitlements](#)
  - [The Affordable Care Act](#)
- Dive Deeper into this area. 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.