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In Union is a project supported by a group of unions. We'll provide you with research on issues that affect working people's lives, examine the records of elected officials on those issues, and give you ways to hold your elected representatives accountable. In Union is not affiliated with, does not take contributions from, and does not make contributions to any candidates or political parties. For more information, please visit www.inunionusa.com.

RESOURCES FOR NAVIGATING THE AMERICAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The health care system can be challenging to navigate, but there are individuals and organizations available to help. Here are some resources for you and your family:



Low-Cost Prescription Drugs for Seniors.

Big Pharma has been price gouging American patients for years. For older Americans, rising drug prices can be the difference between life or death. PACE and PACENET are programs offered by Pennsylvania to provide low-cost prescription drugs for those ages 65 and up. For eligibility requirements or more information, call 1-800-225-7223.



Mental Health Services.

In a newly-implemented policy by the Biden Administration, any American experiencing a mental health crisis can dial 988 for 24/7 access to trained professionals. This easy-to-remember number is meant to replace the current National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.



Help or Treatment for Substance Abuse.

If you or someone you know is suffering from substance abuse disorder, there is help. Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) to speak in confidence to a trained professional, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Taking Care of a Loved One? AARP is Here to Help.

From financial and legal questions to medical questions, AARP knows where you can find an answer. From 8am to 8pm EST, agents are available to direct callers to the resources they need. For English, dial 1-877-333-5885; for Spanish, dial 1-888-971-2013.



AUGUST 2022

COMBATING RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS IN PENNSYLVANIA

A newsletter of, by, and for working people

Dear Reader,

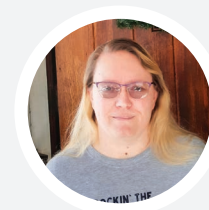
Pharmaceutical companies are reporting record profits while health care costs skyrocket for Pennsylvania families. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt our lives, and the opioid epidemic—a silent, unrelenting killer—continues to tear apart communities across the Keystone State.

This is our first health care newsletter. However, as our quality of life, bank accounts, and mental health suffer, this edition and future editions of *In Union* will seek to offer some insight and, we hope, some optimism for you and your family.

Sincerely,
The *In Union* Team



RISING COSTS AND RECORD CORPORATE PROFITS: Stories from Across Pennsylvania



Melisa believes health care is too expensive and complicated. She doesn't like that insurers only cover certain doctors, and prices are insane if the insurance company decides not to cover a visit.

Melisa D., Glassport



Heather is a nurse and union member. She is extremely concerned about the high mortality rate from COVID among elderly members of the McKeesport community. Heather supports universal health care and believes it would save lives.

Heather, McKeesport



Todd is a teacher and military veteran. He said that he was fortunate to receive good health care as a teacher and is not sure how he would have fared without it. He hopes that President Biden will secure funding for the VA so they can offer veterans proper care in return for the sacrifices made for our country.

Todd B., North Huntingdon

COMPARING THE CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR ON HEALTH CARE

JOSH SHAPIRO (D)

Reining in Big Pharma's Price Gouging

Shapiro's office stopped illegal price gouging by a New Jersey pharmaceutical company, saying, "we won't tolerate illegal price gouging, especially from suppliers and wholesalers who try to rip off Pennsylvania small businesses and their consumers."¹

Real Progress on the Opioid Epidemic

As Attorney General, Josh Shapiro led a bipartisan group of attorneys general from across the United States in successfully prosecuting Big Pharma for their role in perpetuating the opioid epidemic, winning a \$1 billion settlement for Pennsylvanians. The money will go to organizations combating the opioid epidemic through prevention and treatment programs across the state.²

Addressing the Mental Health Crisis for Kids

Shapiro has called for more funding to place mental health professionals in our schools to help our kids deal with mental illness, bullying, substance abuse, self-harm, and discrimination.³



DOUG MASTRIANO (R)

Blocked Funding to Lower Drug Prices for PA Families

Doug Mastriano voted against the proposed 2020-2021 budget, a bill that would have lowered drug prices for Pennsylvania families and provided more than \$100 million for COVID relief programs.⁴

Voted Against Mental Health Care

Mastriano voted to repeal cash assistance programs for adults with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence, and people struggling with addiction. He also voted against providing \$490 million for mental health services and substance use disorder treatment programs—critical funding, especially given the recent rise in suicide attempts and mental illness among children and teens.⁵

Opposed Funding for COVID Relief

By voting against the 2020-2021 budget, Doug Mastriano opposed critical funding for COVID management programs in Pennsylvania. The bill also included \$581.7 million to ease the burden of COVID-related health expenses.⁶



Health Care in the News



Pa. Attorney General Josh Shapiro Shuts Down Price Gouging...

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Pa. proposes board to investigate drug prices rising so fast residents can't afford their medicine



Associated Press

"Mastriano... belittled efforts to contain the virus and spread conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 vaccine"

Read these articles and more on our website: www.inunionusa.com



Are you worried about rising prescription drug costs and access to affordable health care? Make your voice heard.

Visit www.inunionusa.com to take action or call your elected officials today.



CHECK THE FACTS:

1. Newsbreak, 6/18/2020; ABC27, 6/18/2020
2. The Philadelphia Inquirer, 1/27/2022; Fox 43, 1/27/2022
3. WESA, 4/7/2022
4. VoteSmart, SB1350, accessed 7/11/2022; North Central PA, 11/23/2020
5. VoteSmart, SB1350, accessed 7/11/2022; North Central PA, 11/23/2020; The Keystone, 9/3/2020
6. VoteSmart, SB1350, accessed 7/11/2022; North Central PA, 11/23/2020

