



We are happy to bring back The Real Deal, our weekly newsletter prepared by the Realities of Single Payer campaign. It is intended to keep coalition members informed about single payer, the New York Health Act, and related health care news and legislative developments in the state.

[Subscribe](#)

### What's Inside

- Single Payer Survey
- Connecticut Public Option
- New York Health Act Tracker
- Member Spotlight
- Ways to Get Involved
- Growing the Coalition
- Realities Resources

## Single Payer Survey

[New polling](#) finds that, in the midst of the COVID-19 health crisis, New Yorkers still would prefer to keep their current health insurance coverage as opposed to adopting a government-run single payer plan.

Key findings include:

- New Yorkers like their insurance and want to keep it
  - They oppose the New York Health Act when they learn more about it
  - They support fixing the current system rather than starting over
-

## Which of the following approaches to health care reform would you support more?



## Assuming that what you currently pay for health insurance would be the exact same, would you rather:



The findings are validation that the current system is working. The State's public health insurance and subsidies allowed those who lost their coverage during the pandemic to get different coverage. New York's Medicaid program saw an increase in more than 680,000 enrollees between February and November 2020. And health plans implemented several changes to help New Yorkers including no-cost COVID testing and vaccines, waiving co-pays, and expanding telehealth coverage.

The poll was released by the Business Council of NYS. The council's Lev Ginsburg was interviewed about it on [Talk 100.7 in Utica](#).

If you are interested in sharing the poll on your social media accounts, here are a couple examples:

**Survey: 91% of voters say they are satisfied with their current health insurance coverage.**

**Read the survey highlights:**

<https://www.bcnys.org/news/ny-health-act-survey-results>

**#NoNYHealthAct**  
[@SinglePayFacts](#)

**New York State's current health care system covers 95% of residents, with the ability to reach full 100% coverage.**

**A recent survey showed state voters agree working on our current system is better than a new costly system.**

<https://www.bcnys.org/news/ny-health-act-survey-results>

**#NoNYHealthAct**  
[@SinglePayFacts](#)

## Connecticut Public Option

It's worth taking a look at what is going on in Connecticut right now. State lawmakers this week heard testimony on their proposed public option bill. The "Connecticut Option" would create a new state government-run health insurance plan that is available for purchase by residents and small businesses and is subsidized by taxes.

Connecticut State Comptroller Kevin Lembo, a key supporter of the bill, [said](#) he views the plan as “transitional” toward a single payer system.

[New polling](#) shows that a majority of Connecticut voters are not aware of the proposed legislation and are not in favor of a state option — only 36% support the Connecticut Option.

Key findings include:

- 80% of voters prefer for lawmakers to build on Connecticut's health care system rather than create a new state government-run option.
- Voters are especially concerned about the impacts of the state option on act to quality care (77%), jobs/economy (74%) and costs (72%).
- 82% of voters are unwilling to pay more in health care costs and 78% are unwilling to pay more in taxes to finance the cost of the state option.

---

Which of the following proposals to reform Connecticut’s health care system do you support MORE?

	TOTAL	DEM	SWING	GOP
<b>Building on and improving Connecticut's health care system</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>86%</b>
Creating a new government-designed state option insurance system	20%	22%	20%	14%

---

Sponsors say they will pay for the public option plan by collecting \$50-million in user fees from the insurance industry.

The Governor of Connecticut says he supports the idea of [reinsurance program](#) which has been proposed by Republican lawmakers.

## New York Health Act Tracker



[\(A.5248A/S.3577A\)](#)

Senator Gustavo Rivera, chair of the Senate Health Committee, was asked about the status of the New York Health Act during a [radio interview](#) on The Capitol Pressroom.

Rivera said that he and Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, chair of the Assembly Health Committee, are making further changes to the bill and are tallying up the number of sponsors in each house. **According to Rivera, we can expect them to reintroduce the bill any day now.**

He repeated what supporters of the NYHA are now arguing: that COVID-19 further demonstrates the need for the legislation. They cite the significant numbers of New Yorkers who lost their jobs and health insurance as a primary reason.

However, according to the Governor, the safety nets under the State's current health care system are working:

**"Despite the economic downturn, the uninsured rate in New York State has remained relatively flat with 95% of New Yorkers now covered."**

*(see the Health section in the [Executive Budget Briefing Book](#))*

## Member Spotlight



### Suburban Hospital Alliance of NYS

**Who You Are:** Wendy Darwell is the President/CEO of SHANYS

**Background:** Wendy began her tenure as president/CEO of SHANYS on January 1 of this year, but she is no stranger to the coalition's efforts or the intricacies of healthcare policy and legislation at both the state and federal levels. Prior to her current appointment, Wendy served SHANYS for 13 years as its chief operating officer where she consistently excelled at strategic planning and is credited with raising the profile of SHANYS

among legislators, regulators, and the media.

She is a well-respected health policy expert with extensive knowledge about the American healthcare system, reimbursement issues, workforce regulations, and compliance and legal issues, among other areas. Wendy is a healthcare advocate at heart. She spent 13 years in Washington, DC, first in legislative and communications positions for the late Congressman Maurice Hinchey and then seven years as the congressman's chief of staff. She oversaw five regional offices for the congressman and became the resident expert on Medicare policy and related healthcare regulations and legislation.

Wendy holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from American University and an MBA from Hofstra University. A member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the Healthcare Financial Management Association, she has served on numerous regional and state task forces and work groups, including the Medicaid Redesign Team workgroup on Program Streamlining and State/Local Responsibilities.

**Top Issues for 2021:** Shepherding SHANYS' member hospitals through the myriad of state and federal regulations and legislation pertaining to the pandemic is her top priority. While SHANYS and its two divisions – the

Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council and the Northern Metropolitan Hospital Association – have always worked to ensure that reasonable and rational health policy and legislation existed and afforded hospitals with enough flexibility to do their best work every day, this charge has taken on greater urgency and need during the past year.

Wendy says the number one goal is to beat COVID for the sake of our communities, our economy, and our region and for the sake of our healthcare system. It will take a few years for hospitals to bounce back, financially and operationally, from this pandemic.

**Why You Joined Realities:** SHANYS supports the Realities of the Single Payer Coalition because a single payer structure in New York would be disastrous for hospitals and patients. The New York Health Act calls for the elimination of the commercial health insurance industry. Loss of this substantial payer base would upend the already fragile financial structure in which hospitals operate. Current Medicaid rates and Medicare rates pay below the cost to provide care – 74 cents and 84 cents respectively on the dollar – and with the elimination of commercial payers, providers will be even more woefully underpaid. There is no guarantee that Medicaid and Medicare rates will not dip even lower.

Further, the senior citizen population of New York would be required to surrender their Medicare coverage. Given the confusion and uncertainty that continually surrounds health insurance coverage in America, it is unlikely that this substantial block of citizens would forego coverage they know and with which they are familiar and relatively happy.

Finally, it would take years, through a bureaucratic waiver process, to unravel the regulatory strings that tie New York State to the federal government in terms of federal/state reimbursement formulas and insurance regulatory oversight.

The Suburban Hospital Alliance of New York State is proud to work with the coalition and bring helpful information about the true costs of single payer to legislators, the media, and the public.

**Website:** [suburbanhospitalalliance.org](http://suburbanhospitalalliance.org)

## Ways to Get Involved

Rather than seeing the challenges the State faces due to COVID-19 as an obstacle to enacting a Single Payer legislation, sponsors of the New York Health Act along with advocates are arguing that the pandemic demonstrates that why it should be passed in 2021. We will be looking at several ways to engage on the issue this year.

In the meantime, these are some options for getting involved right now. If you are interested in any of the following, please [let us know](#).

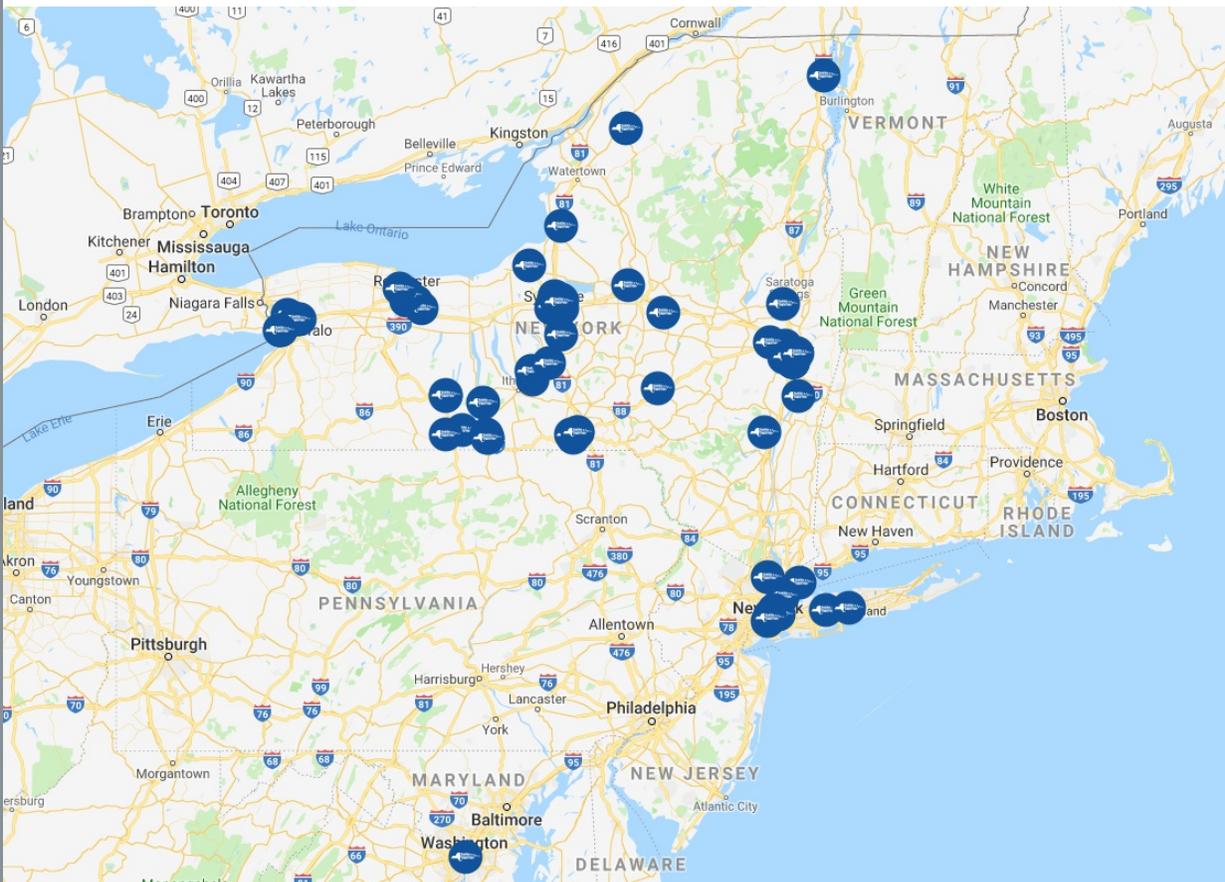
- Issue a memo in opposition to the NYHA
- Issue a press release on the NYHA
- Write a letter to the editor or an opinion piece in a newspaper

## Growing the Coalition

Help us expand our membership in 2021! The coalition is currently 90 members strong. We would like to get to 100 this session.

If you know an organization that also supports allowing a variety of healthcare coverage options rather than forcing all New Yorkers to use a single government-run health insurance program, direct them to the 'Join' section on our website. We are also happy to speak to potential members or provide you with customized materials you can use to recruit potential allies.

Visit our  
website



## Realities Resources

### Useful Links and Information

[New York State 2021 Legislative Session Calendar](#)

[New York Health Act: Cost vs Tax Increase](#)

[What is ERISA? Does it impact the New York Health Act?](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions about the New York Health Act](#)

[Myths and Facts about the New York Health Act](#)

[Single Payer PowerPoint Presentation](#)

[Sample Opposition Memo](#)

[RAND Study on Single Payer](#)