

***No one is going to fix the health care system for us.
Let's do it together.***

We Start with Our Voice



CodeBlueNow! is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to giving the American people a voice in transforming our health care system. We were founded in 2003 immediately following the “Build an American Health System” Contest, where health system proposals from everyday people across the country presented their new models for an improved health care system. CodeBlueNow! started with the voice of the American people. That voice is the heart of everything we do.

We believe a key reason health care reform has been elusive is because the public has been held at arm's length and has never been invited to assist in designing a better system. We also believe that the best solution is to draw upon the strong American tradition of engaging the public in order to fix our broken health care system.

The Health Care System Today

Our health care system is economically unsustainable. Furthermore, it is discriminatory, inefficient, and filled with uneven quality and poor outcomes. Without systemic change, costs will continue to rise, the number of people without health insurance will grow, and quality and efficiency will be more compromised. Today, more and more Americans, regardless of employment status and income, experience serious problems in access, diagnosis, and treatment. And, thousands of skilled and well-intentioned health care professionals find their efforts limited by this failing system.

The Challenge

Our health care system is vast and complex, filled with large and often competing interests. Consequently, reform can appear overwhelming and insurmountable. Our challenge is to offer hope and reframe the dialogue around beneficial outcomes that happen when we take this process outside partisan politics and special interests. CodeBlueNow! knows that large social change is possible by engaging the public. From the founding of this country to the Abolitionist movement, to the civil rights movement and the women's movement, we know positive change is possible by engaging the public. We are also a movement that gathers steam. We are not a quick overnight fix—we are on a steady course toward change.

Our Goal

We want to create the public will for change through a structured citizen-focused dialogue that results in consensus on a shared vision of a functional, affordable, and fair health care system for us all. We want to develop a tipping point so the American public will act and hold our elected officials accountable for change. We intend to:

- Create the will for change by reframing the issue around core values held by most Americans and garnering consensus around key outcomes for health care system reform.
- Gather substantive information on the needs and views of everyday people through the “CodeBlueNow! Pulse,” a survey tool and periodic report that enables us to identify areas of consensus and build common ground.
- Offer health system models that outline a range of options to explore with everyday people and refine with the assistance of recognized experts.
- Mobilize individuals through partnerships with other nonpartisan, civic organizations, to advocate for reforms the public can support.

Why CodeBlueNow! Can Succeed

CodeBlueNow! uses known and effective civic engagement processes and has “blueprints” of health care reform options to present to the American people via the Internet, partnerships, and public forums. We have the necessary expertise with our board and staff; we have a range of solid ideas from our national contest; and we are providing an avenue for public dialogue about shared values. We then intend to build on those ideas and values as we move forward. Our research to date has confirmed that a solutions-oriented approach with a positive message is what will engage people in this critically important effort and create the public will for action.



The Good News

Efforts to change the health care system are gaining momentum. Voters name it as the top issue of concern in the Presidential election after Iraq. Solutions are being tested in many states and by many groups. Sweeping changes are being made to long-standing public programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid. The CodeBlueNow! approach offers the means and the tools to bring in vital citizen participation to make this a moment of real opportunity for reform. The timing could not be better.

Investment in CodeBlueNow!



Early investment has come from national and regional foundations including the Northwest Health Foundation in Oregon and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and from individuals nationwide who are committed to making a difference in health care reform. Donors to CodeBlueNow! believe change is possible. They value CodeBlueNow!'s progress from an idea to a creative, expanding, grassroots effort. They value the growing attention on CodeBlueNow!'s efforts to engage the public, and its use of concrete, data-gathering tools. Support of CodeBlueNow! directly fuels programs to build public will and expand our partnerships

The case for health care reform is clear. Movement forward depends on innovative solutions, ideas, and tools powered by meaningful, participatory activities. We hope you will consider being part of this positive change for current and future generations, and for all of us who deserve efficient, high quality, equitable, safe and affordable health care.

The CodeBlueNow! Story

A Walk around Green Lake

In 2003, Kathleen O'Connor was walking around Seattle's Green Lake with an activist friend, sharing her frustration with the state of the health care policy debate. Her friend said, "Kathleen, why don't you do a contest like the engineers do to build a better robot?" Kathleen thought about it and said the two words that have always gotten her in trouble: "Why not?"

The Contest

Kathleen, a 30-plus-year veteran health care journalist, industry analyst and consumer advocate, was so serious about the idea that she put up a \$10,000 cash award for the First Place winner in the "Build an American Health System" contest. Her colleague, Bill Baldwin, contributed \$5,000 for Second Place. An Associated Press reporter heard Kathleen interviewed about the contest and ran a story that was picked up across the U.S. At one point, she faced over 1,000 unread e-mails on her computer.

More than 100 proposals were received and reviewed by nine independent judges. Winners were awarded the cash prizes and CodeBlueNow! was born the next day, with a core group of 30 former contest entrants. CodeBlueNow! has thousands of supporters nationwide.

A Movement Is Born

CodeBlueNow! is a movement involving everyday Americans who have a big, bold vision. We believe that U.S. health care policy is being held hostage by special interests and partisan politics. We also believe that when it comes to health care, the American public is vastly smarter than they are given credit for – and they deserve a voice in shaping a new health care system.

We Know Change Is Possible

CodeBlueNow! is committed to taking health care out of the clutches of Congress, the White House, and partisan politics. We must reclaim health care so we can have a sustainable and equitable system that works for the American public. We can build a system that is accountable, affordable, effective, efficient, safe and fair. We further believe that by using a process that respects the opinions of the American people, we will get the best from them. We can build a functional system by working together, just as our Founding Fathers did in creating this great country.

We, the people, must change the health care system so it works for us, not against us. Join with us today. Your health depends on it.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is CodeBlueNow!?

CodeBlueNow! is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to giving the American people a voice in transforming our health care system. Our goal is to build consensus and create the public will for change that will result in cost-efficient, high-quality health care for us all. We believe the solution lies with an informed and involved public that demands change.

What will CodeBlueNow! achieve?

CodeBlueNow! will create a vision of a sustainable health care system; the public will to support such a system; and specific policy ideas to get us there efficiently and effectively.

How will CodeBlueNow! accomplish this?

CodeBlueNow! is partnering with other national, nonpartisan nonprofits to engage Americans in a public dialogue around the need for health system transformation and the means to achieve it. But we don't just rally around a cause—we also provide examples of different systems and solutions. We use the CodeBlueNow! Pulse survey tool to measure what is important to the public and the key values and core elements the American people accept and reject. We're transforming the health care system from the grassroots up.

Once consensus is built around specific ideas, we will enlist the technical expertise to turn these models into plans that can be implemented at the state and national levels. Then a motivated and mobilized public can advocate for the solutions they've chosen, and show our elected officials that it's time to act on what we need and want.

What distinguishes CodeBlueNow! from other organizations?

CodeBlueNow! is the only national grassroots organization dedicated to mobilizing a broad nonpartisan engagement to build consensus and create change in the health care delivery system. We form partnerships with organizations that share our beliefs to create a tipping point. We work with numerous national and regional groups to amplify our voices.

What is the timeline for CodeBlueNow!'s goals?

By the end of 2007, CodeBlueNow! will have completed and tested our template for an effective public-will-building campaign. We will have created a baseline of information from our CodeBlueNow! Pulse in Iowa in October 2007. We will run similar public-will campaigns in Washington and several other key states, such as Connecticut and possibly South Carolina. These projects will garner consensus and lead to a national venture with serious citizen engagement. We will expand to more states in 2008, and create candidate and legislative evaluation tools for the presidential election in 2008. Throughout 2008 and 2009, we will start testing ideas on financing, management and delivery system structure. By 2010, when all of the U.S. House of Representatives and a third of the Senate are up for election, we will have created the means and the mobilization necessary to effect change.

Who is involved?

CodeBlueNow! is comprised of dedicated volunteers and professional staff, including health care professionals, business and community leaders, and social activists. Additionally, CodeBlueNow! is supported by a national network of donors.

How can I get involved?

There are many ways to support the mission of CodeBlueNow! and help move toward our goal of health care reform:

- ✓ Make a financial donation to enable CodeBlueNow! to expand our efforts and strengthen our voice.
- ✓ Share your ideas and opinions about health care reform with our staff and your community.
- ✓ Take the Pulse survey at www.codebluenow.org.
- ✓ Communicate to your legislators that health care is a critical issue that needs immediate attention.
- ✓ Introduce CodeBlueNow! to others who would find this effort of interest.