

OUR WISCONSIN REVOLUTION

2023

HEALTHCARE STORIES



ABOUT OUR WISCONSIN REVOLUTION



Our Wisconsin Revolution is a homegrown movement that started here in Wisconsin. Our formation was inspired by Bernie Sanders' run for president in 2016 and his call for a political revolution. Our name connects us to the national movement of people all over the country supporting a new generation of progressive leaders. We are a movement that encourages people to fight for progressive change so that we can once again be responsive to the needs of working families.

STAFF & TEAM MEMBERS

WE ARE THE FACES BEHIND THIS PROJECT & SO MUCH MORE...



RILEY SEVERSON
HEALTHCARE ORGANIZER



MADDIE WATERS
SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL
LEAD



ANDRE WALTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ANDERS HANHAN
ELECTORAL STRATEGY
ORGANIZER



WILLIAM WALTER
POLICY RESEARCH & TRAINING
LEAD ORGANIZER

WE ARE A
GROUP OF
DEDICATED
INDIVIDUALS
WHO WANT
TO SEE REAL
CHANGE IN
POLITICS.



CONTACT US

If you or someone you know has a healthcare story to share, reach out to Riley at riley@ourwisconsinrev.com. Our Wisconsin Revolution will continue collecting healthcare stories to add to this site. Hopefully, this can be a resource to hold our political officials accountable and highlight all of the ways they are failing us.

Our Wisconsin Education Fund is an affiliate of Our Wisconsin Revolution.

We work hand-in-hand to create change in Wisconsin.

FIND US ONLINE:

OURWISCONSINREV.COM
OURWISCONSINEF.COM

 Our Wisconsin Revolution

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 [ourwisconsinrev](https://www.instagram.com/ourwisconsinrev)

 Our Wisconsin Education Fund

 OurWisconsinEF

 [ourwisconsinef](https://www.instagram.com/ourwisconsinef)

JASON POKORNY

WISCONSIN

“

I received the Pfizer vaccine at an academic medical center and felt proud of the advancement in technology that made it possible. Like many, the vaccine really knocked me out compared to others, but minor inconvenience to be done with the pandemic. I assumed that Medicare for All would become more popular with the obvious need for everyone to have healthcare during a pandemic. I was shocked that the only healthcare that was provided for free was the vaccine. Later, my wife received the same vaccine as it was required by her employer. Oddly, it was required by OSHA, the same agency that would protect my union father was somehow mandating a vaccine.

OSHA being used by the companies against the employees was the complete opposite of its traditional role. My wife had much more serious side-effects than I had, and at that time there were zero acknowledged side effects. She saw her doctor, then had to make a occupational health claim which required going to a physician in a strip-mall that is dedicated to denying claims. The strip-mall doctor said all the symptoms were unproven and psychosomatic, when since then all of her symptoms were confirmed in main stream media as common side effects. And, of course, everyone in the family eventually had confirmed covid infection even after getting the vaccines.”

JASON POKORNY WISCONSIN, CONTD.

“So, over the pandemic we saw free vaccines as an alternative to comprehensive healthcare, and nothing for the working people. We saw vaccines mandated by OSHA for working age people, but not for the retired age which would see greater benefit. We saw worker's rights trampled by taking away healthcare decisions, or workers losing their jobs from covid shutdowns. We saw front-line workers forced to report to the job site, while the schools were closed and childcare impossible. We saw big pharma make money, while workers lost jobs that will never ever come back. The movement, inspired by Bernie, that sought to unite all workers regardless of their position on the political spectrum, fell into the trap of identity politics where somehow the horribly corrupt big pharma convinced people they represented science.”

T. L. ARKDALE, WI

“I worked for 38.5 years for the state of Wisconsin and retired at the age of 56. My pension is \$3,000 a month. My healthcare premiums for my husband and myself would be \$2,200 a month, which is not including copays, deductibles, coinsurance and dental or vision. My husband had to go on the Affordable Care Act while I use my sick leave premiums. Why? Because Wisconsin does not have premiums for just two people, you can only do single or family. The family amount is almost triple what a single person would pay.

ETF (employee trust fund) of WI informed anyone with WEA Trust that they would replace this plan since it was leaving the state. Since I live in Central WI they said Security Health Plan would be a good replacement. This is NOTHING like what I had with WEA. WEA is a PPO, Security is an

HMO. When I went to my dermatologist and had skin cancer removed I had to pay 100% of the bill because he was “out of network.” How can that be since my dermatologist accepts Security Health Plan? Because even though ETF names the plan Security Health Plan your little insurance card says SIMPLY ONE HMO and THAT isn’t covered! All my appeals were rejected.

Marshfield Clinic will send me to either Stevens Point, Wausau, Wisconsin Rapids and/or Marshfield to see doctors. This is at least an hour to 1.5 hours away from my home. Next enrollment period I am signing up for Madison and just driving there instead of all these places to get healthcare. The area outside Milwaukee and Madison are ill served.

I hope someday we get Medicare for All.”

E.S. EAU CLAIRE, WI

“As a middle-class citizen who works 40+ hours a week with employee benefits, finding affordable therapy options that are readily available is incredibly hard. I work in a social services field where I am listening to other people’s traumas daily so I decided it was time for me to seek my own supports as to avoid secondary trauma and burn out. After calling around to a few therapy agencies in my area, I was able to find a location that could get me in under my insurance and my wait was only a couple of weeks. Other agencies were looking at months out for a wait time. While doing the paperwork for my intake session, I was shown the price of this individual session after it was run through insurance. The price of my intake session was over \$200 with every following session being priced at \$125.

Thankfully I was able to utilize a program offered through my place of employment to offset these fees, I acknowledge that this is a privilege that many do not have. Being able to afford mental health services is essential to arguable everyone. Every single person can benefit in one way or another from therapy or other mental health services. People should not have to wait months to see someone and people should not have to spend hundreds of dollars per session to get the help they need. Affordable and available mental health services would help communities in so many ways.”

JULIANE DRAZE MARINETTE, WI

“I am a cancer survivor. Rectal cancer stage three. Diagnosed at 42 years old. I was working in healthcare before my diagnosis. I had worked in healthcare for 10 years. 2 years working as a care worker doing home care. 7 years working in environmental services at a nursing home. I left because the nursing home did not mandate the covid vaccine. I needed to take care of myself and get my treatments. My treatments were important. I made sure I had my boosters. I was told if I had gotten Covid while in treatment, it would set me back. I needed to receive chemo. Going through treatment, waiting for approval from insurance was hard. The insurance companies determine what they will cover. We had United with my husband's work. His workplace switched to Blue

Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. Because he works in Michigan. BCBS made everything harder. They still have not paid for my pre surgery scans to remove the cancer.

Cancer is a scary illness. I was happy with a United that there was a nurse that called me and checked on me. That was so nice. I lost my job I was “separated.” I took all my sick pay whatever there was. I had no short term disability. That was something I had to pay into on my own accord. When I was being paid very little in wages, I started at \$9.25 an hour. I got quarter raises annually. I didn't renew my health insurance before 2020. I went on my husband's plan. I never signed up for short term disability.”

JULIANE DRAZE MARINETTE, WI, CONTD.

“You’re just working and trying to pay bills. So I never got any short term disability. Actually, if a company cares about their employees. They should set that aside for their employees. Honestly I had to take care of myself. We were able to apply for financial assistance. That was helpful.”

M. MADISON, WI

“When I was 14 years old, I experienced several traumas in a short amount of time. The unexpected death of my aunt who I was very close to. The death of my grandmother after her long battle with alzheimer’s and dementia. A tragic fire at my family’s farm. In the span of four months, the world as I knew it ceased to exist. While a series of traumatic events would be hard for most people, it was especially damaging to my young self. I am eternally grateful I had a support system to guide me through this incredibly difficult time in my life. I had the privilege of insurance through my mom’s job, which helped me get the care I needed. I was able to get into my primary care physician fairly quickly, where I was listened to, believed and given as much autonomy as a 14 year old could ask for. I was able to have my levels checked, go

through screenings and learn about my options, without worrying about the financial stress that these appointments would have on my family. I was able to meet with a psychiatrist and a cognitive behavioral therapist on top of my primary care physician, all working together to help me. My story could have been much different if my family didn’t have insurance, or we weren’t surrounded by the ground-breaking medicine and research that Madison is known for. I believe that everyone deserves adequate medical care. This includes getting in to see the doctor fairly quickly, appointments being at accessible times of the day for varied work schedules, cost efficiency, privacy and autonomy. Creating accessibility for Wisconsin residents is vital to solve the mental health crisis happening throughout the United States.”

A.K. CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI

“My struggle with the current healthcare system revolves around preventative care. Something that I don’t think gains enough attention are the incredible costs in the therapy realm. Going to therapy is something I rely on, it is something that helps with daily tasks and obviously my mental health. However, it is also something that is so costly I have to budget for it. Not only does this mean I go less than I should, it also means I go without numerous months or have to figure out what I can go without to afford the sessions. Our system is so flawed that I have the option of eating peanut butter sandwiches for a month or increasing my already high credit card debt. I believe it should be a human right to be able to access preventative care. In addition to this, time and time again I refuse to go to the doctor for

different issues because of the cost. If our political officials really cared about the people they are serving, they would be working hard to make sure that Americans could afford an adequate healthcare system—and not have to decide between groceries or a much needed doctors appointment.”

ANONYMOUS NEENAH, WI

“About 10 years ago I had Badgercare Medicaid while unemployed. I lost Badgercare when I took a second shift job paying \$11/hour and no benefits. One year later I broke my tibia and fibula and ankle and heel while at home. I was unable to receive unemployment insurance benefits because I was not able to work for 11 months. I lost my job, but I gained Badgercare.

The next job I took after the 11 month recovery was \$11 second shift with no benefits and I lost Badgercare again. A few months into that job, I was hospitalized for cancer and lost my job but gained Badgercare again.

I am now disabled. Whenever my family received Badgercare, it was difficult to apply for and constantly got asked for more information on our income and expenses

and were told we no longer qualified until we called and cleared it up. It was a big stress. My wife and I both went to college and still found the process difficult. I have not liked my healthcare insurance since 1990.”

C.O. RICHLAND CITY, WI

“In September of 2014, our Mom suffered a critical brain aneurism. She spent 5 weeks in the ICU at the UW Hospital . When she was released to go home, she had to learn to walk, talk, dress herself, etc. Throughout the next year, she suffered numerous TIA’s and soon dementia set in. It got to a point where keeping her at home was no longer an option, she needed 24 hour care. The next hurdle was how to afford a facility without losing the farm. While working with an Estate Planner and an Estate Attorney, we began the long process of stripping our Mother of every penny she had earned, closing her savings and checking accounts, life insurance policies were cashed in, supplemental insurance policies were cancelled and her name was taken off the deed to her and our Father’s farm.

Our Mother was considered “destitute,” placed on Medicaid and shipped off to a nursing care facility. She lived for another 6 months.

The entire healthcare system we live under needs to be thrown out. We need to push for Medicare For All. The elderly need to be taken care of, as most of us realize the “Golden Years” aren’t so golden.”

OUR WORK MOVING FORWARD

OUR WISCONSIN REVOLUTION AND OUR WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING REAL CHANGE IN WISCONSIN.



WE FIGHT FOR:

- MEDICARE FOR ALL
- WORKERS' RIGHTS
- BIG \$ OUT OF POLITICS
- LEGALIZATION OF CANNABIS
- GREEN NEW DEAL
- LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

AND SO MUCH MORE!

