

Ensuring Affordable and Accessible Health Care

USW Core Values Educational Series – Issue 2

It's no surprise that affordable health care and prescription drugs came in as the second highest priority for our members [when we surveyed them early this year](#). We are always fighting at the bargaining table for outcomes to lower copays and deductibles, prescription drugs, and ensuring members and their loved ones have affordable coverage. No American should avoid going to the doctor because they can't afford it.

Our Advocacy on Health Care Over the Last Few Years Has Focused on Affordability.

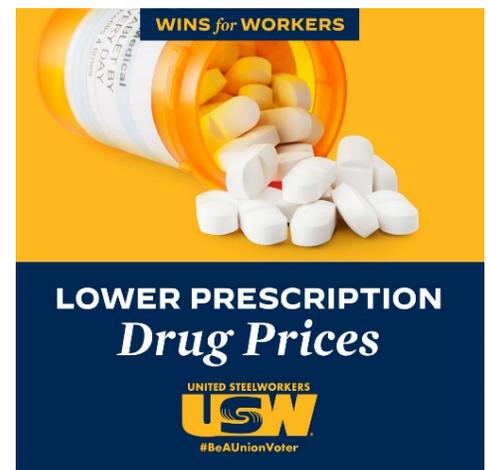
Protecting Patients and Workers – Adequate staffing has a direct impact on the quality of care that residents and patients receive. According to one USW member in long-term care, "Safe staffing would mean residents get the care they deserve and pay for. Short staffed units lead to delayed cares, extended wait times for basic needs and daily cares and inexperienced staff cutting corners to finish tasks. Being dependent on others for all of your needs and having very little say in how and when those needs are met, day in and day out, can contribute to depression and failure to thrive."

Our union tirelessly advocates for legislation to secure staffing requirements in the health care sector, and will continue to do so. Safe staffing efforts means patients receive better care and workers are safer.

Keeping Prescription Drugs Affordable – This historic passage of the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) is a milestone achievement toward making prescription drugs more affordable for Medicare patients and could pave the way for future reforms. (See the Senate roll call vote [HERE](#) and the House [HERE](#).)

Here's how:

- For the 50 million Americans with Medicare drug coverage, the new law will cap out of pocket costs at a maximum of \$2,000 per year while allowing Medicare the ability to negotiate prices – with the ultimate intent of lowering prescription drug costs for seniors.
- Insulin in particular will be capped for Medicare enrollees at \$35 per month, which should help ease the financial strain for the one in three beneficiaries who suffer from diabetes.
- The Inflation Reduction Act also includes inflation controls, where pharmaceutical companies will be penalized for imposing price increases beyond inflation.
- Under the Inflation Reduction Act, vaccines will be covered for both Medicare and Medicaid participants, further reducing medical costs for retirees.



Better legislation surrounding affordable health care means we can focus our bargaining to in other areas, like better wages and retirements benefits. Our union will continue to advocate for health care affordability for everyone.