



In February 2018, a diverse group of Americans launched an ambitious national effort, United States of Care, to change the dialogue about the future of health care in the United States.

THE MISSION of United States of Care is to ensure that every single American has access to quality, affordable health care regardless of health status, social need, or income.



VOICES of REAL LIFE



United States of Care is listening to the Voices of Real Life!

The individuals involved in the *Voices of Real Life* are from different backgrounds, brought together to guide and advise United States of Care's work of making policy recommendations that are fiscally responsible, politically durable and serves all individuals.

Each member has committed to sharing their expertise on the needs of their communities to create a positive vision for health reform. While each member's direct involvement in health care differs, they all understand what people in their community need from the health care system, barriers that hinder people from living their lives fully, and how these factors are experienced and communicated in the real world.



REBEKAH AZAYLIA ALEXANDER

Rebekah is a millennial caregiver from Bellerose, Queens in New York City who has been a co-caregiver to her maternal grandmother from Puerto Rico for over eight years. Her experience as a young co-caregiver while working and pursuing her Master of Public Administration Degree full-time shaped her commitment to advocacy for labor and healthcare policies that support caregivers and their families during these periods of heightened need. Rebekah is also a member of the inaugural Caring Across Generations CARE Fellowship, where fellows are trained in communication and media outreach to stakeholders including elected officials and candidates. She has eight years of fundraising and development management experience currently working as an Assistant Director of Annual Giving at Yale University. She has a Master of Public Administration from the Marxe School of Public and International Affairs at Baruch College.



SHANE BAKER

Shane is a husband, dad, and teacher who lives in Southern Minnesota along with his patient wife, two beautiful daughters, and their lap-warmer, Gus Gus the Wondermutt. As a former church professional, and because of his 20+ years of experiences with students, Shane is especially interested in young peoples' access to health care, particularly in the areas of mental health and preventative care, as well as issues connected to health care affordability for families.



DR. LISA FITZPATRICK

Lisa is passionate about improving health by engaging people in plain language. She is an infectious diseases physician, CDC-trained medical epidemiologist and founder of Grapevine Health, an organization focused on improving health literacy and patient engagement. Her career has spanned research, clinical medicine, global health, community health education and patient advocacy. Most recently she served as the medical director for Washington DC's Medicaid program. Check out her Dr. Lisa on the Street video.



KRIS F. GARCIA

Kris lives in Colorado with his wife and kids. Kris is active in pushing for change in his state and nationally, advocating for change in areas like paid family leave, LGBTQ rights, transgender and transition health care, and mental health and suicide. He believes that when developing policies we need to be mindful to make sure they are inclusive of all people.



JOANNE CORTE GROSSI, MPP

Joanne has served as the Pennsylvania State President of AARP since 2017 focused on improving health care for seniors. Prior to that, Joanne was appointed by the Obama Administration as the Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for Region III where she worked with federal, state, local and tribal officials on a wide range of health and social services issues.



HUNTER HUSAR

Hunter is a technologist with a wide range of experience in and out of healthcare. As a software engineer, he's played a leadership role in the development of several health tech startups, from building tools to help hospitals save money on hospital beds and capital equipment, to building a platform for large insurers to manage their technology portfolio, his journey has given him a unique and privileged experience in the healthcare industry. As a former high school instructor, he's also had a window into the healthcare needs of at-risk and disadvantaged teens from Chicago. As a son he's a caregiver of a cancer survivor and an advocate for non-partisan changes to our healthcare system.



SIDNEY MCCARTHER

Sidney McCarther is currently serving as AARP Missouri Volunteer State President, where he has served as a volunteer for over 16 years. Sidney has a passion for advocating for the rights, education and outreach, and affordable health care for all. Sidney also volunteers as Personnel Team Chairperson and Assistant Treasurer at his Church-Grace Baptist Church and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Central High School Alumni Educational Foundation-KC MO. Recently Sidney has become caregiver and advocate for his wife who is having some serious health problems





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BHAVNA MEHTA

Bhavna works with paper cutting and embroidery to tell stories that combine figurative imagery with botanical motifs, text, and shadows. Using paper as skin and thread to connect and mend, using cutting and sewing to talk about exposing and hiding, she makes work about relating and remembering. Born and raised in India in an extended family, she was surrounded by women who constantly embroidered, knitted, sewed, and created for the home. Mehta has exhibited widely in San Diego and Southern California and has won multiple awards in juried shows. She collaborates with artists making public art, using paper as a design medium. She has engineering degrees from both India and the United States and worked as a software engineer for many years before turning to art. Find her work at www.bhavnamehta.com



SUMMER MOSS, PT DPT

By trade Summer is a physical therapist in the pediatric setting. She has spent most of her life studying mental health and more recently its impact on healthcare outcomes, culture, and burnout. Summer founded a local student mental health advocacy chapter called Active Minds on Campus in which her and her team recruited speakers, promoted Mental Health First Aid certification, and pioneered a video series called the Faces of Mental Health utilizing the power of narrative to change the conversation on mental health disorders in academia and the workplace. Language has power from the prosaic to the more poetic and Summer is excited to add to the discourse that promotes change in healthcare on such a large scale.



AZA NEDHARI, MS

Aza brings more than 15 years of experience in community organizing, reproductive health education, and program management and development. She is a Certified Professional Midwife, Family Counselor, and the Founding Executive Director of Mamatoto Village, a perinatal family support organization in Washington DC that utilizes a three-generation model that integrates a holistic approach to care. Aza is a fiercely dedicated woman who believes that by promoting health equity, the reduction of barriers in maternal and child health begins to dissipate; giving rise to healthy individuals, healthy families, and healthy communities. Aza was recently honored by the Mayor of the District of Columbia with a "Washington Women of Excellence Award" in the Leader in Maternal Health. Aza is pursuing her Doctorate in Human Services with a concentration in Organizational Leadership and Management. Aza is a mother to three spirited and gentle children and partner to an amazing artist.



ELIZABETH NORIEGA

Elizabeth is a full-time mom and half-time student studying American Sign Language Professional Interpretation. While she is learning how to navigate the life of being a mom of a little girl with Down Syndrome, she helps encourage and support new moms that just found out about their kid's diagnosis. She is an active member of Northern Virginia Down Syndrome Association and an athlete ambassador of the National Down Syndrome Society. For her, it is very important to help the Latino and special needs communities. Additionally, Elizabeth has been a part of the Kaiser Permanente Research Bank Community Advisory Board since 2014 and was recently invited to be a member of the Advisory Board for the VA Medicaid Department.



PATRICIA PASECHNIK

Patricia Pasechnik, 62, has spent her whole life in northern New Jersey in the suburbs right next to New York City. In 2009 and 2017 she was diagnosed with breast cancer and since she is a self-employed hair stylist, she had to navigate both insurance coverage and care by herself. After a period in remission, she is once again battling cancer and trying to figure out the best way forward with the help of her friends and two daughters.



NICOLE SMITH-HOLT

Nicole lives in the Minneapolis area. She is a mother of four and a policy advocate for insulin access and affordability after the death of her son Alec in 2017. Nicole is the Charity Ambassador for T1International as well as a co leader for MNInsulin4all, an advocacy group working for affordable insulin for all diabetics in MN. Nicole is also a MAPE member. Nicole has also been appointed as co-chair for the MN Advisory Task Force On Lowering Pharmaceutical Drug Prices. Nicole is also a member of the Founder's Council for US of Care. She is a Financial Aid Specialist at Minneapolis College and a graduate of St. Catherine University of St. Paul, Minnesota.



REBEKAH G. TAUSSIG

Rebekah is a disabled writer and teacher in Kansas City with a PhD in Creative Nonfiction and Disability Studies from the University in Kansas. She is interested in the powerful connections between the cultural stories we tell and the world we live in, from physical spaces and economic opportunities to social roles and interpersonal relationships. Her writing circles around the question of what it means to live in a particular body, and you can always find her doing this work on her Instagram account (@sitting_pretty) where she regularly composes "mini-memoirs."



DR. MARIA VERDUZCO

Maria was born and raised in Yakima, WA. While growing up, her family did all sorts of agriculture work so she is well familiar with the struggles and challenges Farmworkers face. Maria knew early on that she wanted something better for her family so she focused on her education. Currently, Maria continues to work for the residency and is the Clinical Site Director. She works at Central Washington Family Medicine Residency program, a FQHC, in family medicine with obstetrics. Maria obtained a BA from Central Washington University in Ellensburg and a Doctor of Medicine degree from the University of Washington.



AMY WEBB

Amy is an artist, writer, mother and disability advocate. She's been blogging at This Little Miggy Stayed Home for 13 years sharing lifestyle content ranging from creative DIY's and personal essays, to style and home design. Amy has 3 daughters, one of whom was born with a physical disability. In addition to writing about their disability journey, Amy interviews other families and individuals in her popular "Disability Spotlight" series. In 2019 she published her first children's book, When Charley Met Emma, which teaches children about disability and navigating these new friendships. She is currently working on a sequel.



GREG WILLIAMS, MA

As a person in long-term recovery from addiction himself, Greg's career has been dedicated towards creating positive changes in access to quality health care and recovery supports for the over 20 million American's still struggling with addiction. He is the award-winning filmmaker of feature length documentaries, The Anonymous People and Generation Found. At Third Horizon Strategies, Greg currently manages a national public value Alliance for Addiction Payment Reform aimed at improving outcomes for patients, payers, and health systems.