

Uniting for Health: Why message matters & the underlying research

UNITED FOR HEALTH

Messages that bridge the political divide
to finish the job on health reform

FAMILIESUSA 
THE VOICE FOR HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS

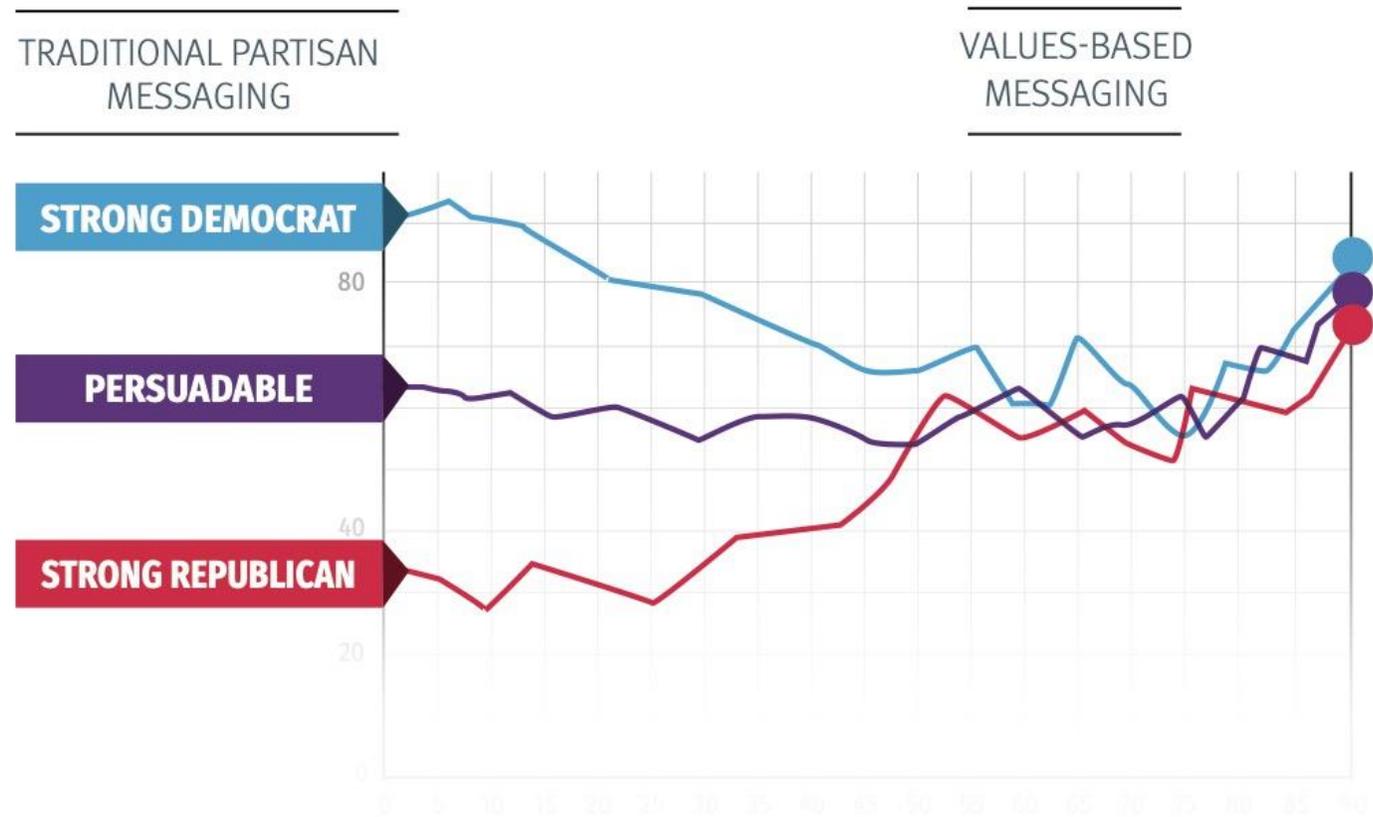
What's at stake



Everything.

We have the opportunity to move health reform forward in DC and across the nation, despite being in the most polarizing era in generations.

But we won't be successful if we are only talking to ourselves



Real health reform must:

- Make health care more affordable to everyone in our country, including access to meaningful coverage for all families
- Ensure that health is available to all in our nation regardless of if they are white, black, or brown; if they live in rural America, how they identify, and their immigration status
- Deliver much greater value, focusing on health and not just procedures that make a lot of money for the health care industry

Purpose of the research and message guide

- Effective narratives that can beat the toughest messages from the other side
- Evocative statements or “talking points” that activate the places where people are united no matter their political party
- Words, phrases and concepts to use and which to avoid

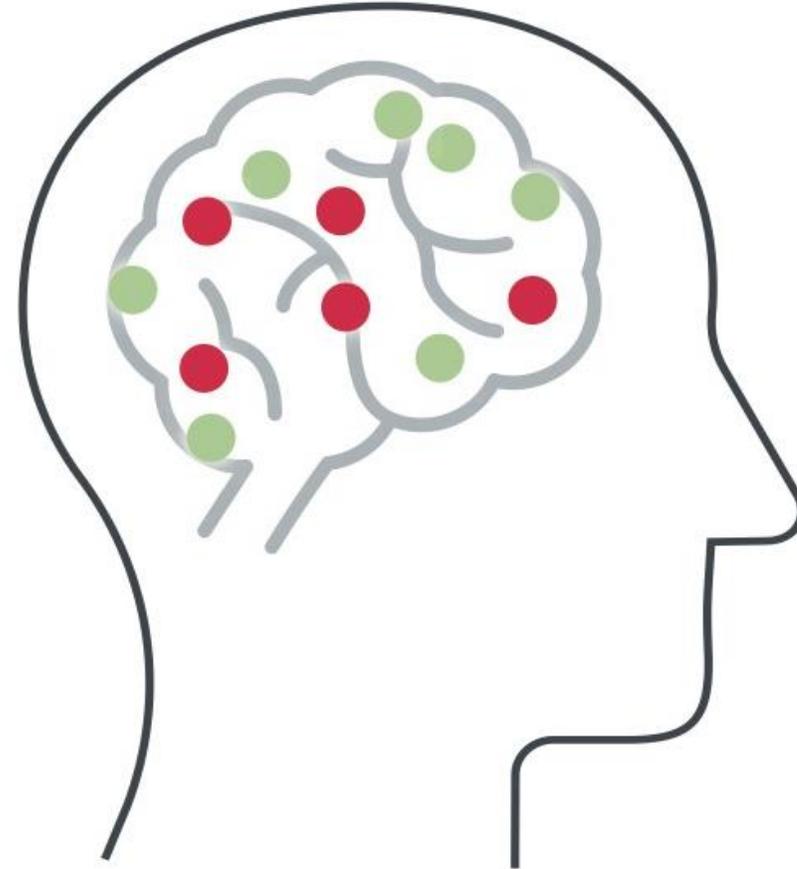
Challenge

- Even in a global pandemic, health has become politicized.
- Opponents like pharmaceutical companies and others in the health care industry already are working to frame health reform as “socialized medicine”
- Ideologues on the right and left are keeping us divided and preventing commonsense reforms like stopping prescription drug companies from constantly increasing prices and making sure that our health insurance premiums and costs are made affordable -- not out of control

Words matter

While we can find common ground, different words and sequences of words trigger different responses.

No matter the topic, science teaches us that our values drive our political responses, not policy arguments, and it happens in a nano-second



Dial Tests: Method for finding the most powerful messages



- 90-second dial tests allow us to see where all voters could come together around values-based evocative messages— even in the face of opposition

The difference in results between dial-tested and poll-tested messages



POLLING



90 SECOND DIAL TEST

Narratives and messages that test **over 50%** are considered strong.

*Our research found strong messages
that test **over 70%.***

Making it Actionable: Key takeaways for your work

What we learned: Big picture

Americans have united beliefs on health reform:

- Every child, every family, every individual should have access to quality affordable health care and shouldn't face financial ruin if they need care.
- Too many people have been shut out due to cost, coverage or color
- Leaders must come together and finally fix the problem once and for all

What we learned: COVID-19 context

The most effective messages are comprehensive. If they draw on lessons of the pandemic, it is just one component of a broader context, and broader solutions, to problems they see as “pre-existing conditions” prior to COVID-19

- Pandemic has shaped voter views and messages can leverage recent events to strengthen support for health reform
- Health equity/“Social determinants of health” examples more resonate than in past, *especially when included with health reform messages*

Messaging Guide Offers

Different Levels of Narratives for Different Purposes:

- Soundbites: Applause lines, taglines, and single-sentence narratives
- Talking Points: In responding during media interviews or one-on-one with policy makers
- Longer Narratives: Could be used for speeches and Op Eds

How to use the guide

Steal the messages

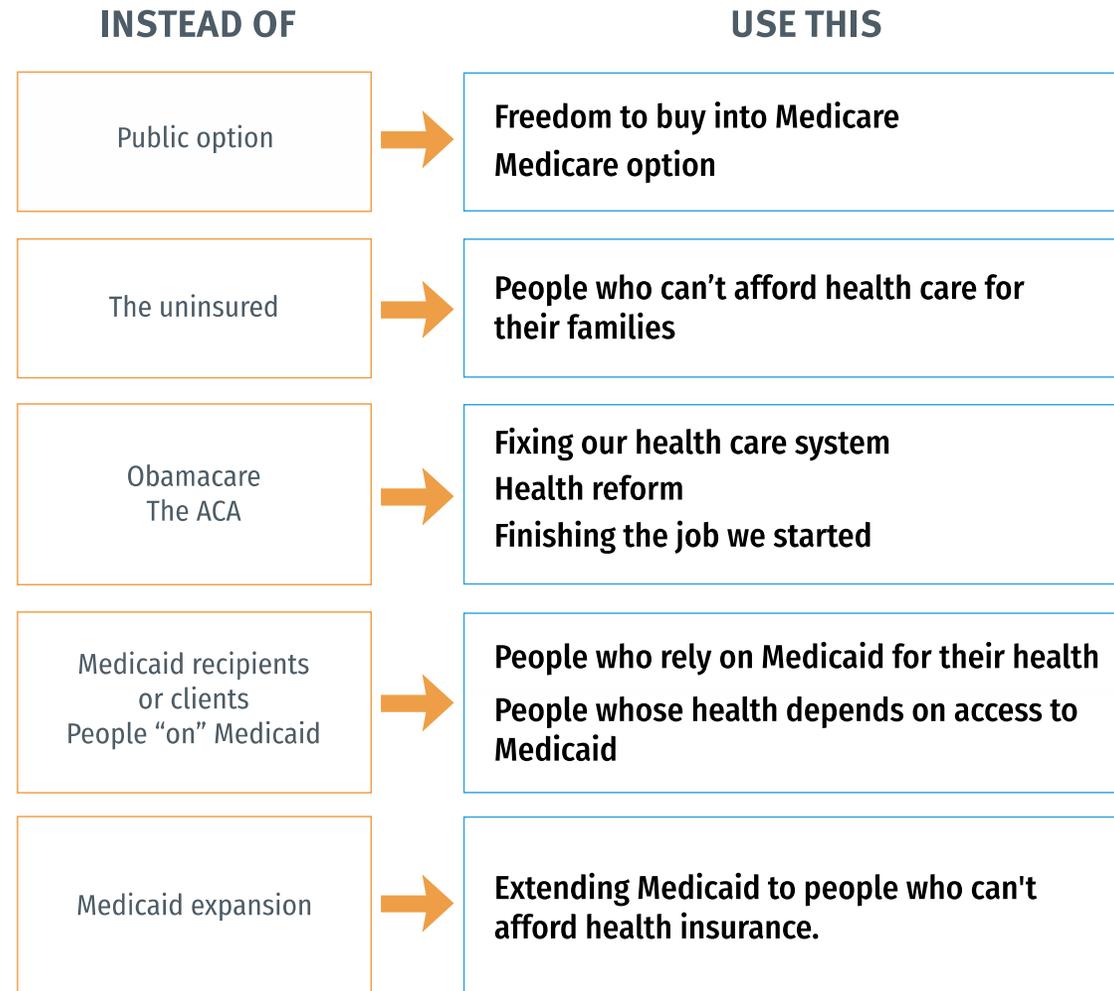
Understand there are many paths to similar goals. These are not a hierarchy, but more a smorgbord



Important takeaways

- We won't be successful if we are talking only to ourselves.
- It's important to use inclusive language to include everyone who will be helped by health reform.
- What people **know** about health policy affects roughly 1% of their support. It's the values they care about that drives them to support or oppose policies. Facts aren't what move people.
- Small things matter. i.e. when you're talking about Medicare and Medicaid, put Medicare first.
- Don't be too specific on numbers. Round them off to make information more accessible.

Changing our language



Universal soundbites



“
Our health should not
depend on our wealth.
”

“
We should have the freedom
to choose what’s best for
our families’ health. ”

“
Whether we’re white,
black, or brown, everyone
who lives in America
deserves the same health
care politicians get. ”



Examples of What's in the Guide: Talking points

TALKING POINTS: Short & strong messages about **Access, Affordability & Coverage**

- All of us should have the opportunity to live a healthy life and receive high quality health care regardless of our race, ethnicity, or gender.
- I believe in a family doctor for every family. No one in this country should ever have to worry that they can't afford health care or have to choose between filling a prescription and paying their rent or mortgage.
- Our elected representatives shouldn't have a better health care than the rest of us. We should give them one year to fix the problem and if they can't come to an agreement, their families and staff can pick from whatever options the rest of us have.

TALKING POINTS: Short & strong messages about Equity

- Cancer, COVID, and medical bills don't come in red and blue, and they don't check to see if you have a green card. It's unbelievable that, during a deadly pandemic, too many public officials haven't figured out that we're all in this together, that if some of us get sick, all of us are at risk.
- If there's anything we've learned from a virus that doesn't care where you come from or how much you earn, it's that if any of us is sick, all of us can become sick, and we all should have access to affordable health care, regardless of our color, wealth, or immigration status.
- The coronavirus not only exposed the problems with our health care system but gave us a blueprint for change. Wealth shouldn't buy health, and color shouldn't buy illness. We're all in this together, and we're all more essential than we know.

Remember: Steal these messages!

- If you want full messaging guide, please contact UHPP or Families USA
- Use these lessons and messages to shape your own communications– they can be applied to any policy issue!
- Share this information with your allies & ask them to join you in joint communications/collective actions
- Want to get more involved? Contact Families USA to learn about additional ways to apply messaging, partner, and plug in
- Register for Families USA's (virtual) Health Action Conference 1/26-1/28

Questions?

Dedicated to creating a nation where the best health and health care are equally accessible and affordable to all



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