Citizen groups worked with doctors and nurses to find ways to extend medical care to more people.

The participation of grassroots groups in battles over health care reform continues in the 21st century.

Public health nurses, often hired by community organizations, provided care and instruction to immigrant and poor families in both urban and rural areas.

Today's major health care challenges include accessibility and quality of care for military veterans, the disabled, and the elderly.

A nurse from the Henry Street Settlement with a Chinese family in the Bronx, New York, 1930s
Courtesy National Library of Medicine

Families at Sabine Farms, a New Deal resettlement community for displaced tenant farmers near Marshall, TX, pooled their resources to employ a physician, Dr. Lee, 1939
Courtesy Library of Congress

Veteran Mark Howey participates in a public forum on delays in obtaining care at Veterans Health Administration hospitals, Phoenix, AZ, May 9, 2014
Courtesy Laura Segall/Getty Images

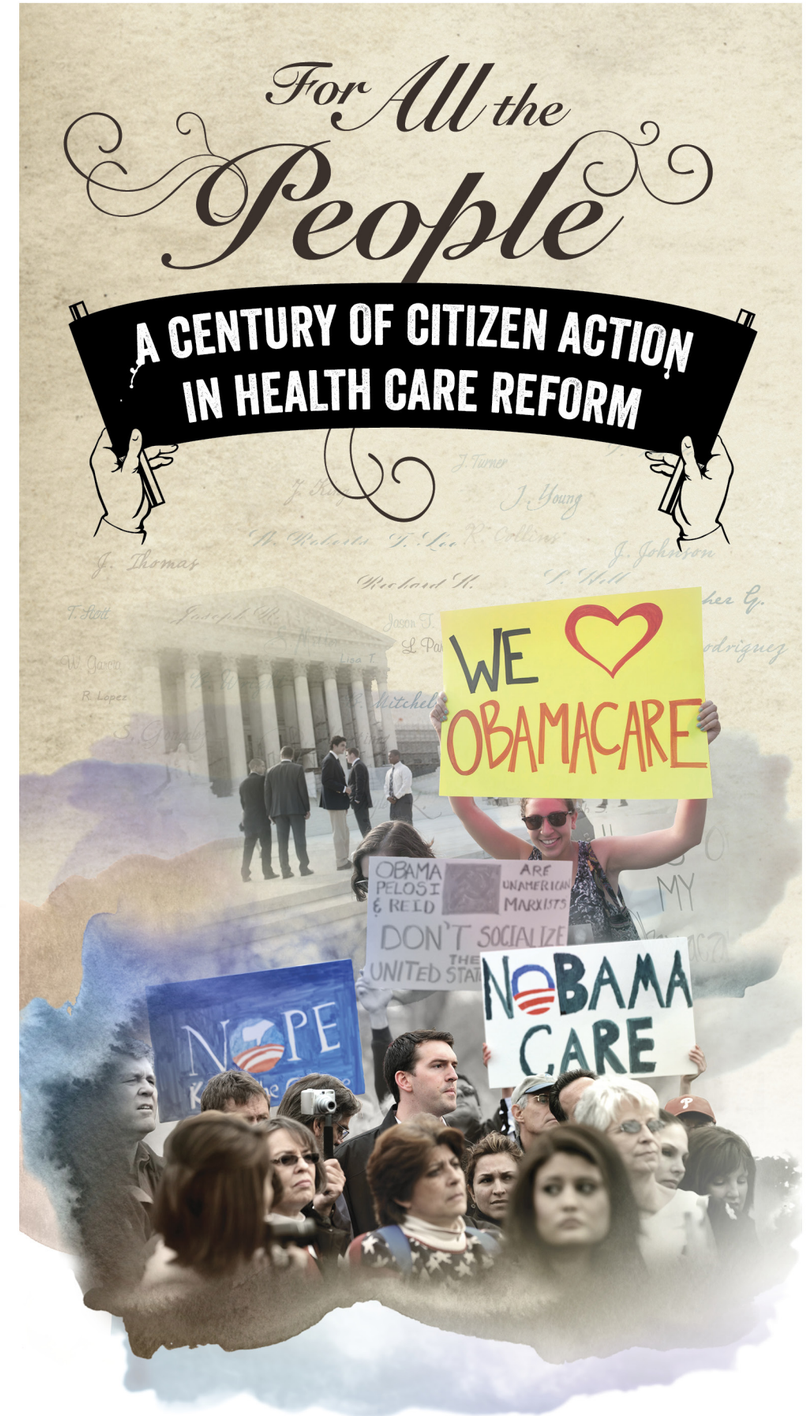
A Public Health Service physician examines an elderly patient in a home setting, ca. late 20th century
Courtesy National Library of Medicine

ON THE COVER:

In front of the Supreme Court, demonstrators await a decision on the Affordable Care Act, June 28, 2012
Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images

Rally in opposition to the Affordable Care Act in Washington, D.C., March 16, 2010
Jewel Samad/AFP/Getty Images

The National Library of Medicine produced this exhibition
Guest curator: Beatrix Hoffman, PhD
Designer: The Design Minds
www.nlm.nih.gov/forallthepeople



U.S. National Library of Medicine

Health care reform has been a contentious political issue in the United States for more than a hundred years. Even after the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, which expanded access to health insurance coverage for millions of people, Americans continue to disagree on whether and how to **make quality health care available to all.**

From the beginning of the 20th century to today, citizens have made their voices heard in these debates. Health care reform is usually associated with presidents and national leaders, but this exhibition tells the lesser-known story of how **movements of ordinary people** helped shape the changing American health care system.

Early in the 20th century, rapid industrialization, new waves of immigration, and growing labor unrest made the health of workers and the poor a matter of national concern.

Pauline Newman, Lithuanian immigrant, garment worker, union leader, and supporter of health insurance for workers, ca. 1910
Courtesy Kheel Center, Cornell University

The Urban League, a civil rights organization, co-sponsored this well-baby clinic to combat high infant mortality in African American neighborhoods, Detroit, MI, 1919
Courtesy University of Michigan-Bentley Historical Library

Activists demanded health programs and called attention to disparities in medical care.

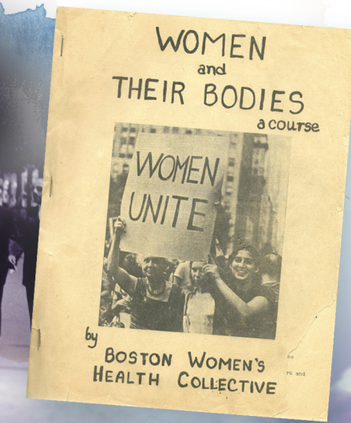
Doctors and medical students in the civil rights movement protested racial discrimination in health care.

Medical Committee for Civil Rights participates in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, 1963
Courtesy National Library of Medicine

Farm workers' organizations opened clinics for migrant agricultural workers and their families.

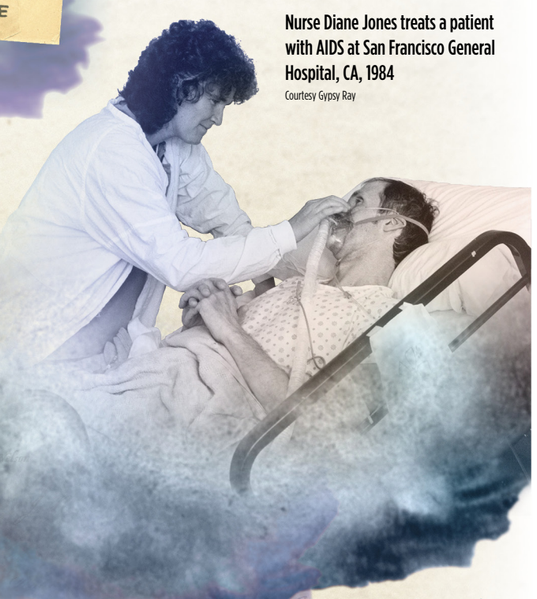
Patients in the waiting room of the National Farm Workers Service Center's health clinic, decorated with a poster of union leader Cesar Chavez, Calexico, CA, 1973
Courtesy Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Photographer Glenn Pearcy

Since the 1960s, social movements have defined health rights as essential to ending the second-class status of marginalized groups.



The pamphlet that later became *Our Bodies, Ourselves* inspired women around the country to start self-help groups and feminist health clinics.

First edition of *Women and Their Bodies* course book, produced by the Boston Women's Health Collective, 1970
Courtesy The Boston Women's Health Book Collective



Nurse Diane Jones treats a patient with AIDS at San Francisco General Hospital, CA, 1984
Courtesy Gypsy Ray