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Dear <<First Name>>,

As we open the new year, we're taking a moment to reflect on the progress and partnerships that shaped the final stretch of 2025. While this issue is arriving in January, it captures the momentum, lessons, and wins that our network carried through the end of last year—work that continues to inform how we move forward together.

Across regions and issue areas, our partners met a complex moment with clarity, courage, and care. In the face of mounting pressure on health systems, civic infrastructure, and community trust, they advanced solutions rooted in lived experience, shared leadership, and long-term vision.

This issue offers a snapshot of that work—from protecting coverage and expanding harm reduction, to strengthening civic engagement and inviting more people into shaping a healthier, more just future. We're grateful to begin 2026 grounded in what this community made possible together.

Three Things

To **watch**: [Dual: The True Cost of Care, Episode 4](#) — This episode centers Rickii, a disabled Black woman and disability access advocate in Louisiana, illuminating how policy, care, and lived experience intersect.

To **listen**: [A Few Good Things From 2025 \(Really\)](#) — In this episode of An Arm and a Leg, Dan Weissmann explores bipartisan state-level wins that expanded health care access against long odds.

To read: [Rural health care is disappearing in Tennessee](#). Time to pass reform — An opinion piece examining the erosion of rural care and the reforms needed to protect access.

When Clinicians Become Civic Leaders for Health

Civic Health Alliance

This year, **Civic Health Alliance** launched a first-of-its-kind training designed to equip physicians with the knowledge and tools to understand how civic engagement directly shapes health outcomes—and how clinicians can play a role in protecting care beyond the exam room.

Developed in collaboration with the **League of Women Voters** and delivered at an academic medical center, the training reached **71 resident physicians across three sessions**, filling a critical gap in medical education. By helping clinicians connect policy, participation, and public health, the program strengthened the capacity of the health workforce to advocate for patients and communities when access to care is at risk.

Building on this foundation, CHA partnered with **Doctors for America** to host a [national webinar](#) responding to health care cuts tied to H.R.1. The webinar marked the beginning of an ongoing effort to mobilize clinicians and communities to engage collectively, share tools, and take action to protect health systems and services. If you're interested in learning more or staying connected, you can [sign up here](#).

When healthcare professionals organize to protect care, they help ensure coverage and access are upheld at the policy level.

As a former Rx Foundation grantee, Civic Health Alliance remains a valued part of our broader community, and we continue to engage with and learn from their leadership at the intersection of civic participation and health.

From Policy to Practice: Expanding Access

Empower Project

In 2025, **Empower Project** advanced its work to ensure public benefits are accessible, dignified, and rooted in community trust—partnering with Blueprint North Carolina to translate Medicaid expansion and benefits policy into real-world access for families across the state.

At the center of this collaboration is **MyFriendBen**, a user-friendly digital tool that screens eligibility for 17 public benefit programs, including SNAP, ACA subsidies, SSDI, and WIC. By simplifying an often confusing process, the tool helps individuals understand what they qualify for and how to secure resources

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Beyond technology, Empower Project supported a relational outreach strategy alongside six grassroots partners—equipping organizers with scripts, messaging, and community-based engagement tools. Together, these efforts reduced barriers driven by mistrust and administrative complexity, increased benefit enrollment, and strengthened long-term civic participation and community power.

Rx Foundation's partnership with Empower Project reflects our shared commitment to connecting policy, tools, and trusted relationships to improve health outcomes and strengthen community-led solutions.

Protecting Coverage as a Matter of Trust and Justice

National Council of Urban Indian Health

In 2025, the **National Council of Urban Indian Health** (NCUIH) helped secure a major policy victory protecting access to care for American Indian and

Alaska Native communities—successfully advancing exemptions for AI/AN people from Medicaid and SNAP work requirements and from more frequent Medicaid redeterminations under H.R. 1.

While the precise number of people affected is difficult to quantify, the implications are far-reaching: **approximately 1.3 million adult American Indian/Alaska Native people are enrolled in Medicaid**, meaning these protections safeguard coverage at a national scale. By preventing unnecessary administrative barriers and coverage disruptions, the exemptions reinforce the federal trust responsibility and protect access to care for urban AI/AN communities already navigating systemic inequities.

This victory was achieved in close collaboration with key partners, including the **National Indian Health Board** and the **Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty**, demonstrating the power of coordinated advocacy grounded in lived experience and shared leadership.

Policy victories matter most when they are paired with community-based care that meets people where they are.

We are honored to support and learn alongside NCUIH as they advance policy solutions that uphold trust responsibility, protect coverage, and center the health and dignity of American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

From Harm Reduction to Systems Change: Building Power That Saves Lives

Sea Change

Over the past year, **Sea Change** has deepened its role not only as a provider of peer-led harm reduction services, but as a leading force in organizing, policy advocacy, and accountability around opioid settlement funds in New Jersey and beyond. Their work demonstrates how community-based care and systems change move together to strengthen health outcomes.

Alongside expanded peer services—reaching 175 individuals in 2025 and distributing 826 doses of naloxone in just three months—Sea Change has helped shape statewide and national conversations about how opioid settlement dollars should be spent. The organization co-founded the New Jersey Opioid Settlement Advocacy Group (NJ OSAG), produced county-by-county settlement spending reports across all 21 counties, and led efforts to stop a proposed \$45 million clawback of funds intended for community-driven treatment, harm reduction, and recovery.

Sea Change's leadership has increasingly been recognized beyond New Jersey. Executive Director Elizabeth Burke Beaty was appointed to Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill's DHS transition team, invited to speak at the Drug Policy Alliance International Reform Conference, and is contributing to the national *Roadmap for Opioid Settlement Funds*. At the same time, Sea Change has supported organizing efforts in states like North Carolina and Wisconsin—helping ensure that rural and impacted communities are centered in decisions about care and accountability.

Building power locally is even stronger when leaders are connected across regions and states.

Rx Foundation has been honored to support Sea Change as they expanded from direct service into organizing and policy leadership—strengthening community power so systems respond to those most impacted.

Building Power & Policy From the Ground Up

Tennessee Health Care Campaign

This year, the **Tennessee Health Care Campaign** (THCC) strengthened its role as both a trusted advocate and a connector across the health justice ecosystem—expanding its reach in Tennessee while contributing to regional efforts to improve health access, accountability, and outcomes.

THCC joined the Southern Alliance for Public Health Leadership (SAPHL), a

multi-state coalition organizing health leaders across Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and North Carolina, and deepened its rural organizing by engaging 34 county mayors around county-managed health services. This work is helping surface gaps between rural communities and urban institutions—and laying the groundwork for locally driven solutions rooted in community needs.

Nationally and statewide, THCC's analysis and storytelling helped shape public understanding of health policy, with coverage in [The Commercial Appeal](#), [The Chattanooga Times Free Press](#), [The Tennessean](#), and [The Knoxville News Sentinel](#) on issues ranging from diabetes treatment access to rural health care reform. Together, these efforts ground policy in lived experience and strengthen the conditions for healthier communities across Tennessee.

Beyond policy and systems, lasting health justice also depends on whether people feel invited, seen, and empowered to participate.

We are grateful to be in relationship with the Tennessee Health Care Campaign as they build cross-regional power, elevate rural leadership, and ground health policy in lived experience.

Inviting People Into a Living Story of Democracy & Care

United Vision for Idaho

United Vision for Idaho is creating space for people to see themselves as essential to the future of democracy—and, by extension, to the conditions that shape health, safety, and wellbeing in their communities.

Since late 2023, UVI has partnered with OMG Female Productions to document a growing pro-democracy movement through a participatory documentary series. The project invites people across the country to contribute their own stories, footage, and everyday acts of resistance and renewal—recognizing that collective wellbeing depends on whether people feel seen, included, and empowered to act.

This effort is both a reflection of what's already happening and a call to action. UVI is asking people to step forward, share their stories, and help build a people-powered narrative that honors courage, creativity, and care in the face of uncertainty. View the [film trailer here](#).

The invitation is simple and urgent: share your story, submit your footage, and be part of shaping what comes next. Visit [this link to learn more + submit your story](#).

Rx Foundation values our connection with United Vision for Idaho as they strengthen civic belonging and illuminate how democracy and community wellbeing are deeply intertwined.

With Gratitude

Taken together, these reflections underscore a simple truth: durable improvements in health and wellbeing are built through relationships, shared leadership, and sustained commitment. The work highlighted here reflects the depth and diversity of what our partners carried forward through 2025—and the foundation they are laying for the year ahead.

At the Rx Foundation, we see our role as a conduit—connecting people, ideas, and resources to support equitable solutions that grow from community leadership. We're thankful to be in relationship with these partners and look forward to continuing this work together in 2026.

In solidarity,
The Rx Foundation Team



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