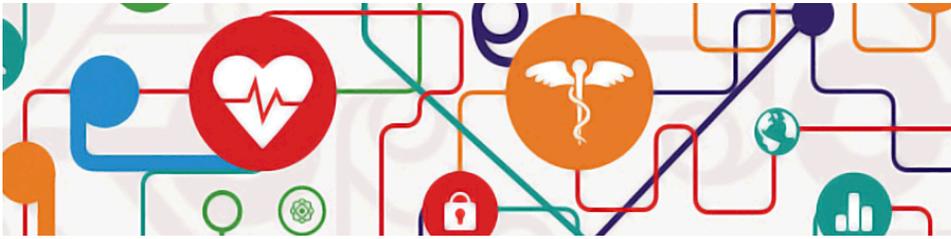


# CENTER FOR HEALTH INNOVATION & POLICY SCIENCE



## EVENT RECAP

March 21, 2019  
Health Policy Symposium

## The Future of the VA: Privatization or the Model for a U.S. Single Payer System?



*Left to right: Kelly Wadsworth, Jim Tuchschiidt, Aaron Katz, Steve Fihn, Suzanne Gordon and Hugh Foy*

Moderated by health policy expert Aaron Katz, our panel discussed their vision for the future of the VA. Panelists included:

- **Dr. Jim Tuchschiidt**, former VA physician, administrator, and Acting Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Health
- **Suzanne Gordon**, Journalist and author
- **Dr. Steve Fihn**, former VA physician and administrator, and current UW Chair of Internal Medicine
- **Kelly Wadsworth**, pastor and veteran
- **Dr. Hugh Foy**, UW Surgery professor and co-founder of the Western Washington Chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program

The Center for Health Innovation & Policy Science (CHIPS) held its inaugural Health Policy Symposium on March 21, 2019 with over 100 attendees. The topic, suggested by the local chapter of Veterans for Peace, was "The Future of the VA: Privatization or the Model for a U.S. Single Payer System?"

In addition to University of Washington students and faculty/staff attending the event, attendees self-identified as veterans, health care providers/administrators, community advocates, and community members. Staff from various Congressional offices were also in attendance. Thirty minutes were dedicated to audience Q&A following the panel discussion.

Because of the varied, large audience, we had everyone in the room participate in several live online polls to make the night a bit more interactive. In the beginning, we started with a word cloud exercise. Participating attendees chose one-word answers to describe the VA health system.

We also tried to get a sense of where the audience put themselves on a quadrant at the beginning and end of the event. Did individuals want to see the VA system privatized and/or did they think it was a model for single payer? The sample size changed (67 at beginning vs. 53 at end), but the number of individuals supporting privatizing and viewing the VA health system as a model for single payer seemed to cluster together more tightly by the end of the event. Few people remained who supported VA health system privatization.

What one word would you use to describe the VA system?



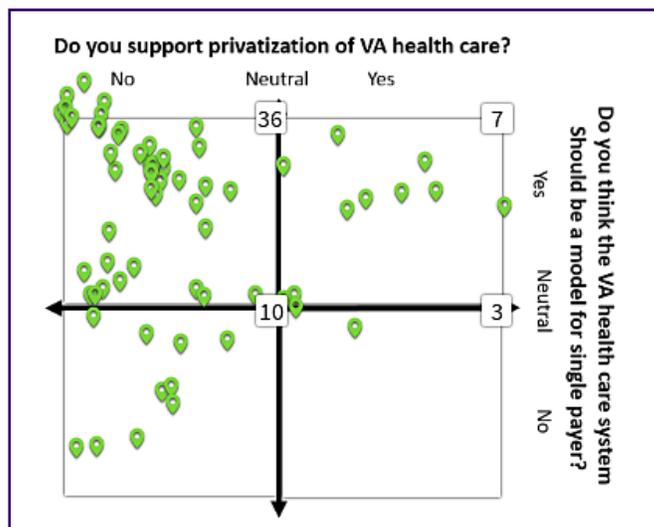
## TAKEAWAYS

Despite having a range of experience directly with and near the VA health care system, the panel supports the continuing monitoring and strengthening of the VA. They had divergent ideas about what could be done differently and what the future should look like, but agreed that the VA should not be completely privatized.

Some ideas included:

- public-private partnerships for space and shared resources,
- expansion to better serve veterans' families and local communities,
- simplifying eligibility for services, and
- easing up on marketing restrictions to allow VA outreach to veterans.

Before the panel



After the panel

