Helping people have smarter, more honest conversations about the U.S. health care system.
LOOKING BACK
AT 2021

While we’re proud of what our team has achieved this year, we also recognize that we couldn’t have done any of this work alone. You — our listeners, supporters and sources — push us to be smarter journalists and better storytellers. Together, we are shaping health care conversations that are grounded in data, human experience, equity and honesty. In that sense, this report reflects the impact of our entire community.

To help share what that impact has meant to us and for us as an organization, we’ve asked Board Chair Stu Kantor to interview Dan Gorenstein, our Founder and Executive Producer.

**Stu: How has Tradeoffs changed over the past year?**

Dan: To me, this is the year that Tradeoffs truly evolved into a full blown organization. We’ve really found our cadence and voice as a weekly show. We’ve more deeply invested in our newsletter and the dissemination of new research. We’ve curated live events. We’re thinking beyond just the podcast to all the ways we could help create smarter health policy conversations. And I know this isn’t the stuff most people talk about, but internally, we’ve improved tremendously. We’ve made new hires, built out our internal operations, and focused on developing a healthy and strong culture.

**Stu: What has been an unexpected surprise?**

Dan: That so many people are listening! Particularly at the college level. Maybe it’s because I’m the son of two teachers, but I’m thrilled that our work has been used in 25+ colleges and universities around the country. It speaks to the quality of our work. And it’s exciting to think that the health care leaders of tomorrow are already tuning in today.

**Stu: What are you most proud of?**

Dan: There is a saying I use a lot that I borrow from health care about practicing at the top of your license. And this year, I’ve seen our team practice at the tops of their licenses over and over again, I mean Leslie Walker’s reporting on third-party administrators and Ryan Levi’s reporting on generic HIV drugs. That was some best-in-class work!

**Stu: Any folks you want to thank?**

Dan: There is no way we’d be here today if it wasn’t for our funders, from the individual donor who gave us $5 to our institutional partners. Their belief in this vision is what has gotten us to where we are today. I also have to thank our Advisory Board, Governing Board and Research Council. They are so generous with their time and expertise, and they make our work smarter and richer.

**Stu: Stealing a page from your playbook, I’m going to ask you a question you ask at the end of your interviews — anything else you’d like to add?**

Dan: Thanks! We are onto something, and we are really excited about 2022. There are no easy answers in health care, and I believe one of the most important things we can offer is a place to discuss those difficult questions with honesty and empathy. It’s an honor to help foster those conversations, and I look forward to sharing many more of them with everyone in the years to come.
SEASON 2
IN REVIEW

TOPICS WE’VE COVERED

- **Coronavirus**
  12 EPISODES
- **Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health**
  11 EPISODES
- **Health Insurance**
  10 EPISODES
- **Prescription Drug Policy**
  7 EPISODES
- **Hospitals**
  7 EPISODES

EPISODE HIGHLIGHTS

**A New Era of Gun Violence Research**
2020 was a record-breaking year in the U.S. for both gun sales and gun deaths. Researchers, helped by the first new congressional funding for gun violence studies in more than 20 years, are racing for solutions.

**Aducanumab Aftermath Series**
A special series examining the potentially sweeping consequences that a new Alzheimer's drug, known as aducanumab or Aduhelm, could have on millions of patients' lives and billions of dollars in health care spending.

**Inside Big Health Insurers’ Side Hustle**
America's largest health insurance companies are moonlighting as a kind of middleman, known as a third-party administrator, that few people ever hear about. We peered into the black box of these third-party administrators' operations.

**Preventing HIV Just Got a Lot Cheaper. What Took So Long?**
After nearly a decade of sky-high prices, new generics have sent the price of the HIV prevention drug PrEP plummeting. What kept it so expensive, and will the price drop help us finally eradicate HIV?

**Schools Brace for Pandemic-Fueled Mental Health Needs**
Kids are returning to in-person school this fall with increased rates of depression, anxiety and other pandemic-fueled mental health challenges. How will schools use billions in new federal funding to meet this growing need?
BY THE NUMBERS

1,000,000 episode downloads (and counting)

4.8 out of 5 stars on Apple Podcasts

OUR AUDIENCE

Over 3/4 of our listeners come from health care or related fields

Over 1/4 of our listeners are professors and students

1/3 of our listeners work in executive, director or manager-level positions

ACCORDING TO OUR AUDIENCE SURVEY...

93% feel that Tradeoffs has influenced or informed their thinking about health care.

81% of respondents working in health care have shared Tradeoffs to educate a colleague or student.

86% of educators who use Tradeoffs in their classrooms said it offers a more engaging way to present ideas than traditional course content.

LISTENER GROWTH IN THE PAST YEAR

Daily Downloads
Season 1: 1,573
Season 2: 2,737

74% INCREASE

Weekly Downloads
Season 1: 2,477
Season 2: 8,310

235% INCREASE

Monthly Downloads
Season 1: 3,144
Season 2: 12,517

298% INCREASE
As someone who’s worked in health care policy for nearly 20 years, inside and outside of government, Tradeoffs has educated me on more issues in a shorter span of time than any other mechanism I can think of.

Tradeoffs has provided me with superb analysis and concrete examples to put into context what I was learning as a master’s in public health student. As a teaching assistant, I heavily relied upon Tradeoffs to facilitate discussions and teach my undergraduate students.

Been waiting for a long-form platform that dives into the nuances, conflicting incentives and institutionalized barriers to change that are so difficult to resolve in our health care system, presented in an accessible human way. Love it. Please keep going!

As a state legislator, I like to hear about policies being considered or implemented in other states. I also like hearing about a variety of issues that bring up points I haven’t considered before and could tie in together with existing ideas or programs. [Tradeoffs] leads me to look into certain topics in more detail.
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THANK YOU FOR A GREAT YEAR!

KEEP IN TOUCH!

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