



## Leana Wen

### Topics

Business and Management, Global Affairs, Health and Wellness, Inspirational Speakers, TED Talks

### Travels From

Maryland

### Bio

Dr. Leana Wen is an emergency physician, public health leader, and a passionate advocate for patient-centered healthcare reform. The author of the critically-acclaimed book, *When Doctors Don't Listen*, her TED talk on transparency in medicine has been viewed over 2 million times. In 2019, Dr. Wen was named one of *TIME* magazine's 100 Most Influential People. Currently a Visiting Professor of Health Policy and Management at the George Washington University Milken School of Public Health, Dr. Wen is also the Distinguished Fellow at the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity. Previously, Dr. Wen served as the Health Commissioner for the City of Baltimore, where she led the nation's oldest continuously operating health department in the U.S., founded in 1793, with 1,000 employees committed to improving well-being and combatting disparities. Under her direction, the Baltimore City Health Department led the country in health innovations and was recognized by the National Association of County and City Health Officials as the Local Health Department of the Year. Facing an unprecedented number of people dying from opioid overdose, Dr. Wen issued a blanket

prescription for the opioid antidote, naloxone, to all 620,000 Baltimore residents. This program saved nearly 3,000 lives in three years. Dr. Wen started Vision for Baltimore, which provides glasses free of charge to every child who needs them, and championed B'More for Healthy Babies, a public-private collaboration that reduced infant mortality by nearly 40 percent. She expanded trauma and mental health services; secured funding for Safe Streets, a program to treat gun violence as a contagious disease; and led public health campaigns on vaccinations and childhood obesity, and racism as a public health issue. Dr. Wen has also served as the President/CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, where she led a national health care organization with over 600 health centers and a presence in all 50 states. As the first physician to lead Planned Parenthood in nearly 50 years, Dr. Wen worked to expand comprehensive care to vulnerable women and families, and she piloted initiatives in maternal health, mental health, and substance addiction prevention and treatment. Dr. Wen graduated *summa cum laude* from California State University, Los Angeles at the age of 18, and earned her medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine before becoming a Rhodes Scholar. She obtained her master's degrees at the University of Oxford and completed her residency training at Brigham & Women's Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, where she was a Clinical Fellow at Harvard Medical School. She has served as the Director of Patient-Centered Care in the Department of Emergency Medicine at George Washington University and a consultant with the World Health Organization, Brookings Institution, and China Medical Board. Currently, Dr. Wen serves on the Board of the Baltimore Community Foundation and on the Dean's Council of the University of Maryland School of Public Health. She has been the Board Chair of Behavioral Health System Baltimore, American Medical Student Association, and American Academy of Emergency Medicine (Resident & Student Association), and has served on Boards including Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore's Promise, and Baltimore Healthy Start. Her past advisory Board service includes governmental, nonprofit, academic, and corporate entities including the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Council on Graduate Medical Education, Lown Institute, and Accolade Inc. The author of dozens of articles in scientific publications including *The Lancet*, *JAMA*, *Health Affairs*, and *British Medical Journal*, Dr. Wen has given six TEDx and TEDMED talks. She has been an op-ed contributor for the *Washington Post*, National Public Radio, and *Baltimore Sun*, and is regularly featured on NPR, CNN, PBS, MSNBC, ABC, and CBS. A Fellow of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine and Academy of Medicine, she has received recognition as *Modern Healthcare's* 50 Most Influential Physician Executives, American Public Health Association's highest award for local public health work, World Economic Forum's Young Global Leaders, and *Governing's* Public Officials of the Year. When she is not working, she is spending time with her two-year old son, Eli.

## SPEECHES

**Population Health** Through her work as a health commissioner and her academic research on local, state, national, and international health systems, Dr. Wen presents case studies and best practices for improving population health and care delivery while lowering healthcare spending. She presents lessons learned from community-based pilots and public-private collaborations that include new models of care and patient engagement, expanded role of community health workers, alternative payment reforms, and other innovations that address social determinants of health. Depending on the audience, she tailors her examples: for instance, she can focus on specific populations with innovations in children's care with pilots to reduce infant mortality, lead poisoning, and asthma readmissions versus care for older adults

with programs to reduce fall prevention and focus on chronic disease management. She challenges the audience to focus on tangible solutions that move the needle to improve health outcomes and achieve equity.

**Patient-Doctor Relationship** When she was a medical student, her mother was misdiagnosed for a year before she was found to have metastatic breast cancer. Dr. Wen was her mother's caregiver while going through her medical training. She wrote a book and started a center on patient-centered care research to share lessons and best practices, and she gives presentations and workshops all the over the country to patient, provider, and health system audiences. What are the five things patients can do to speak up and advocate for better care? What can providers do, in the time of high-tech medicine and increasingly time-pressured practices, to bridge the growing distance with their patients and to return to the art of healing? How can hospitals transform their systems to foster better communications, reduce medical error, and improve the care experience?

**Wellness** Dr. Wen has given dozens of talks to corporate audiences about employee wellness. One type of presentation is to employees on mental health and well-being, reducing stress, and simple things to improve health every day. She also includes, if requested, patient advocacy tips including advice for those caring for children and older parents. Another type of presentation is for managers and HR directors. Dr. Wen has studied and implemented citywide wellness initiatives and corporate wellness strategies; she discusses best practices that improve employee well-being and productivity. She can also approach the topic from her work on the opioid epidemic and mental health crises—the “diseases of despair”—and speak in particular about what everyone can do to build resilience and incorporate mental and physical wellness routines into their work and home lives. In addition, as an expert in women's health, she has also given presentations on women as employees and how companies can prioritize women's health and well-being.

**Work-Life Balance** Dr. Wen draws upon her experience of being a mother of young children and caregiver of aging parents while holding high-pressure, high-intensity executive roles in government and running a national healthcare system. She frequently speaks to diverse audiences of students, young professionals, managers, and executives about navigating work-life balance. She talks about mapping out core values and thinking through a career as “seasons”, referencing both her own experiences negotiating dual roles as mother/executive and her research on women, parents, and caregivers in the workplace. This talk can also combined with topics on wellness and women's leadership.

**Women in Leadership** Women, and women leaders, face distinctive challenges in the workplace. Trained in trauma/ER medicine and having been one of many “firsts” as a woman of color, Dr. Wen speaks from first-hand experience and from her professional research about the challenges and opportunities for women in leadership. These include advice for women about the “double bind” and “glass cliff”, such as owning one's authentic identity, negotiating societal expectations, and navigating work-life balance. She also provides suggestions for identifying mentors and mentoring women in the #MeToo era and can tailor presentations for women of color and other diverse audiences.

**Technology in Healthcare** As a practitioner of telemedicine, advisor to health startups, and implementer in government and nonprofit health systems who has piloted tech innovations in urban and

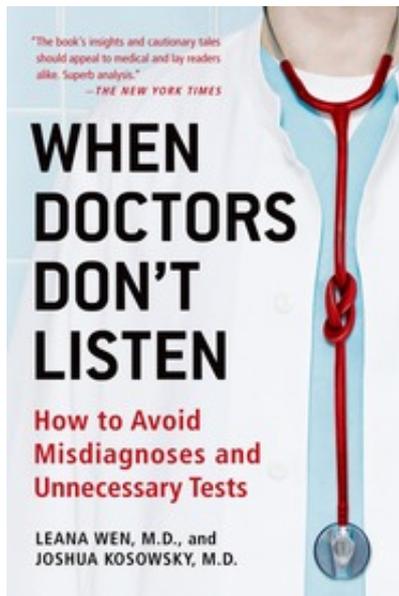
rural underserved communities, Dr. Wen speaks to the promises and challenges of technology in healthcare. Tech solutions can meet people where they are and deliver cost-efficient, patient-centered care, but attention must also be paid to low-tech, high-touch methods and efforts for new advances to reach the most vulnerable. Dr. Wen describes case studies in the U.S. and internationally, discusses policies on the horizon and their implications, and presents practical solutions of harnessing technology to improve health, reduce disparities, and ensure effective and efficient care.

**The Future of Medicine and Public Health** Dr. Wen is a health policy expert with experience in local, state, national and international health systems. She draws upon her broad experience as a practicing physician, health executive, regulator, and advocate deeply involved in politics to map the future of the healthcare system. How will the outcome of the 2020 elections change the landscape of healthcare delivery? What are the major trends in payment reform, health workforce, and medical technology, and how will they shape the future of medicine and public health? She references her diverse professional experience and her academic research to forecast possibilities and describe the collaborations, strategies, and values necessary in 2021 and beyond.

**Leadership Lessons** In addition to leadership lessons specific for women, Dr. Wen gives talks in crisis leadership, innovative leadership, and overcoming adversity. She speaks about crisis leadership: providing medical care during the Boston marathon bombings; working in conflict/post-conflict zones in Africa, the Middle-East, and Asia; and leading outbreak responses for Zika, measles, Ebola, Legionnaire's, and the opioid epidemic. Dr. Wen speaks about the importance of being the first to step up, to do what you can, and not letting perfect be the enemy of the good. She shares her own examples of overcoming adversity (including of coming to the U.S. at age eight then living in poverty, and overcoming a severe speech impediment). Other topics include lessons from innovative leadership locally and nationally, drawing upon her background convening unlikely stakeholders around shared goals; leading collective impact, public-private collaborations in public health; and getting to points of agreement in turbulent political environments.

**Disaster Preparedness and Response** Dr. Wen is an emergency preparedness and public health expert with deep experience leading disaster response. A practicing emergency physician, she has provided care during crises including H1N1 and Ebola epidemics and the Boston marathon bombings. As Baltimore's health commissioner, she led outbreak responses for measles, Zika and Ebola, and managed complex crises including the opioid epidemic and civil unrest. As a public health professor who has consulted with the World Health Organization and numerous countries on their healthcare systems, she is a leading expert on the novel coronavirus epidemic. She can speak about general principles and lessons learned from disaster preparedness and response. She can also provide an update on the state of the coronavirus outbreak that is tailored to the specific audience: for example, what is the likely trajectory of the outbreak and anticipated impact on markets; what more can healthcare systems do; and what businesses should know and how they can prepare.

## BOOKS



Hardcover

[When Doctors Don't Listen](#) How to Avoid  
Misdiagnoses and Unnecessary Tests

St. Martins Press

In this examination of the doctor-patient relationship, Drs. Wen and Kosowsky argue that diagnosis, once the cornerstone of medicine, is fast becoming a lost art, with grave consequences. Using real-life stories of cookbook-diagnoses-gone-bad, the doctors illustrate how active patient participation can prevent these mistakes. Wen and Kosowsky offer tangible follow-up questions patients can easily incorporate into every doctor's visit to avoid counterproductive and even potentially harmful tests.

**REVIEWS: Praise for *When Doctors Don't Listen*** “The book's insights and cautionary tales should appeal to medical and lay readers alike: they combine into a superb analysis of how doctors listen and think, and offer detailed suggestions for how they could do both better.”

—*The New York Times*

“Leana Wen and Joshua Kosowsky, emergency physicians at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and Harvard University, urge patients to assert their voice. They warn that ‘a health care crisis is not the time to keep your mouth shut,’ but rather a critical time to speak up and be your own advocate.”

—*The Wall Street Journal*

“Wen and Kosowsky demystify medical language and practice and offer straightforward tips.”

—Concord Monitor

“A comprehensive guide to improving doctor-patient relations through empowering patients to take an active role in their care. . .As health care becomes more complex and political, this book provides clear direction toward better care.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“Doctors Wen and Kosowsky (Pocket Emergency Medicine, co-editor) nudge the medical “consumer empowerment movement” forward with this provocative dialogic guide to help patients get the right diagnosis and treatment while avoiding the pitfalls of formulaic “cookbook” medicine. It all starts with an open conversation, the pair assert--much like the banter between car owner and mechanic on NPR's popular Car Talk program--and ends with an active M.D.-patient partnership. “You are the key to your own health, and you have to help your doctor help you,” the duo insist. Recounted are hair-raising stories of patients who bore the brunt of doctors leaping to “worst-case reasoning” instead of listening to what their patients were telling them, like Jerry the car mechanic with a pulled muscle who was treated for a heart attack. The team warns consumers that the transformation from passive recipient of medical care to active partner won't be easy, but provide plenty of how-tos in their “8 Pillars” toward building a patient-doctor partnership. Theirs is an urgent call to action for patients, and a stark heads-up for doctors and the troubled healthcare industry they serve.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Wen and Kosowsky's work is significant... Who should read *When Doctors Don't Listen?* Wishfully, doctors...certainly psychologists, and social workers...mental health providers... [and] anyone who is now or anticipates following family members of loved ones through illness and anyone who is concerned about his or her own medical care.”

—PsycCRITIQUES

“This is a well-written book on an innovative approach to healthcare reform: it challenges patients to take charge of their health and every medical encounter with their doctor. An important topic and an important book--I encourage my patients to read it.”

—Siddhartha Mukherjee, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*

“I have always said that a hospital can kill you as sure as cure you. You must be your own best advocate. Follow the advice of Drs. Wen and Kosowsky...and transform from being a patient to an advocate for your own health.”

—Fran Drescher, actor, producer, activist, and author of *Cancer Schmancer*

“It's critical for patients to advocate for their own health. This book teaches you how...Read it; it will change radically how you approach your doctors.”

—Melissa Etheridge, Grammy Award-winning musician and host of The Melissa Etheridge Radio Show

“This clearly-written, brilliantly and creatively thought-out book, filled with fascinating and horrifying examples of how doctors are now trained to not listen to their patients in order to ‘rule out’ diseases, focuses on ‘ruling in’ diagnoses that not only are accurate, but that will save billions of dollars per year in lawsuit-driven tests. A brave, terrific, essential work.”

—Samuel Shem, M.D., Ph.D., author of *The House of God* and *The Spirit of the Place*

“Leana Wen and Josh Kosowsky have written an authoritative guide to answer a seemingly simple question: How should you talk to your doctor? Through fascinating examples taken from their own clinical experiences, they show how doctors' training fails to teach real listening skills. But Drs. Wen and Kosowsky don't stop there: They also offer up constructive and practical advice that just might save your life.”

—Darshak Sanghavi, MD, Chief of Pediatric Cardiology, University of Massachusetts Medical School, health care columnist for Slate, contributing editor at Parents Magazine, and author of *A Map of the Child: A Pediatrician's Tour of the Body*