

## **WMM4A Meeting Summary - 10.11.17**

This was the first WMM4A meeting at **our new location - the Community Room of Hampton Court, 20 Hampton Ave. in Northampton**. Our previous room (at the Potpourri Plaza) was rented out quite suddenly a few weeks ago, so this will be a permanent change! Many thanks to Jon Weissman for making these arrangements on short notice. The space is a bit cozier than our other one, and most people seemed to like it.

**NEXT WMM4A MONTHLY MEETING: Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> at 20 Hampton Court.**

### **Local updates:**

Barbara B reminded us about the **single payer forum at JCA on Sunday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.** with Sen. Eldridge, Gerald Freidman, Jon Weissman, and Jackie Wolf. Barbara is also collecting personal stories to share with Sen. Eldridge that illustrate problems with the current system. **Please send your story to her at [brwburkart@gmail.com](mailto:brwburkart@gmail.com).**

**Two more upcoming local single payer events** [not announced at the meeting]:

- **Thursday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> at Gaylord Public Library, 47 College Street in South Hadley, 6 – 8 p.m. Showing the film, Fix It.** Community discussion afterwards with Jane Allen and Jon Weissman.
- **Monday, Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> - Indivisible Northampton meeting with Gerald Friedman speaking about single payer.** Potluck at 7:00, meeting starts at 7:30. Location: Pathways co-housing, 25 Mountain Laurel Path, Florence.

Barbara P reported that she met with the N'ton hub to share her experience canvassing businesses in Amherst. The N'ton group is beginning to do that, too. Judi W said that her own employer, a large non-profit agency, has agreed to participate.

Chris M announced the newly-formed Pioneer Valley chapter of DSA (Democratic Socialists of America), with a larger-than-expected crowd of about 50 people at their initial meeting. The chapter decided to form several working groups, the largest of which will focus on Medicare for All.

Jon W invited everyone to take a copy of the new Senior Action Council newsletter. SAC is an activist group representing older people and retirees, and supports Single Payer. Jon also invited people to see him after the meeting to sign Raise Up Mass. petitions for a \$15 minimum wage and paid family medical leave.

Rorry Z reported that a group in Belchertown called "Voices for Justice" is interested in learning more about Single Payer. WMM4A will help with follow-up after Rorry returns from a trip.

Rorry is also involved with Western Mass Psych. Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialists and has been keeping them informed about Medicare for All issues and news.

Ann R reported that the hub in Easthampton had a good turnout at their first outreach meeting. About 18 people participated and formed three working groups.

## **STATE NEWS AND UPDATES**

### **Bootcamp and Lobby Day:**

Bootcamp is a daylong training and prep for Lobby Day, held Oct, 14<sup>th</sup> at Lexington High School.

**UPDATE:** Bootcamp was a successful event with about 80 participants. We'll follow-up to see if there are electronic copies of handouts, etc. we can share to this list. **Lobby Day is Tuesday, Nov. 14, at the Statehouse in Boston, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** Rally and speakers at noon. More info as we receive it. Jon has offered to coordinate carpooling from western Mass. If you can offer a ride or need one, contact him: [jon@gogtt.net](mailto:jon@gogtt.net)

### **Medicaid cost-cutting legislation:**

The Mass. Senate will soon reveal legislation to cut the cost of Medicaid in Mass. Sen. Rosenberg has been vague about the content of proposed legislation, but health care advocates are concerned that along with some "sweeteners," there are likely to be cutbacks that would impact the most vulnerable residents of the state. Rosenberg has indicated that he wants this legislation to move quickly, with a vote as early as mid-November. We will monitor this legislation with the aim of exposing and protesting any proposal that would undermine health coverage for Mass. residents, and to bring single payer into the conversation as the best option for moving forward. Stay tuned!

### **Statewide Single Payer Strategy Forum:**

Several WMM4A activists joined others in Worcester on Oct. 7 to begin drafting a statewide longer-term strategy to win Medicare for All in Mass. A full summary of the Strategy Forum will be posted separately to this listserv soon and hopefully discussed at upcoming hub meetings. We briefly discussed a few of the draft proposals at the WMM4A meeting:

**Legislative:** Coordinate information about state legislators, identify key districts, and consider putting non-binding questions on the 2018 ballot in support of Medicare for All in targeted districts. This process would help us to build our organizing capacity, provide an opportunity to discuss SP with many people, attract public and media attention, and bring pressure on key legislators. We also discussed that this might involve some of our hubs working in neighboring districts, rather than their own.

**Labor:** How can we strengthen our connection with labor organizations in western Mass? From this discussion, some new local connections emerged. For example, Beth E brought a problem to our attention concerning a new – and worse – County health insurance plan being considered for public employees, including many teachers. Barbara B told us about an SEIU provider group called Clinicians United that she could reach out to about single payer.

**Grassroots Organizing:** This is key to building a powerful movement for single payer. Deborah said that Western Mass is a leader in grassroots organizing in the state, with our model of activist groups (hubs) connected through a regional network. The Forum proposed trainings to strengthen organizing skills statewide, and a statewide media/educational campaign. Some good ideas came up in our discussion – such as encouraging town resolutions statewide. A more specific suggestion was to develop and distribute a DVD of people telling their health care stories. It turns out we have a couple of folks in our group with video production skills!

### **WMM4A organizational matters**

Beth E gave a report from the **new Steering Committee** – Deborah, Jon, Beth, Nancy, and Jane. One of the things the SC will work on is money matters for WMM4A. Jon has been looking into having the Warren J. Plaut Foundation act as our fiscal sponsor. Our financial needs are minimal at this point – about \$250 annually for website and email hosting, plus money for copying materials – which we have raised so far by just passing an envelope at our meetings. But raising more money would help us to do more, so we want to at least make that an option.

**Logo** – our new email system and (upcoming) website could use a logo to identify WMM4A. Chris is doing the graphic design, but we wanted ideas from the whole group about overall concept. Some suggestions people made: keep it simple; make “Western Mass” smaller than “Medicare for All” to show that we are not just focused on our region, but on a statewide (and national) effort; about half of those present thought the logo should include an image of people; the logo should convey action / “dynamism”; a question about having a square-ish logo (for buttons, etc?) rather than a long-ish one (which tends to happen because our name is long). A smaller group will work with Chris on next steps.

**NEXT WMM4A MEETING: Wed. Nov. 11, 2017.**

