

Summary - WMM4A monthly meeting Nov. 8, 2017

Celebrating our 6-month anniversary tonight as a regional network advocating for an Improved Medicare for All system for our state and nation!

LOCAL UPDATES:

FCCPR (Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution) – all their endorsed candidates for Greenfield City Council won on Tuesday! These new officials support the full multi-issue program of FCCPR, including Single Payer health care. Contact Judy Atkins: judithga@comcast.net

Other election items especially relevant to Medicare for All – Brief discussion on the successful passage of Maine’s ballot initiative for Medicaid expansion in that state. Also noted that successful progressive bids in Virginia were driven by health care issue.

Easthampton hub – had a great training / Q&A with Beth Eisenberg at their meeting this week, especially clarifying the proposed Medicare for All bills. Plan a showing of “Fix It” in January, exact date not yet set. They’ve invited Jerry Friedman to present at the event. Contact Sara Weinberger: spw128@comcast.net

Amherst JCA hub – Receiving good feedback on their well-attended forum Sunday (11/5). Showing “Fix It” on Monday (11/13) at the JCA, 7:00 p.m. The group would like to expand and extend its reach to Amherst and surrounding towns, not only JCA members. Next meeting is Monday Nov 27, 10:00 -11:30 a.m. in Amherst. RSVP Barbara Burkart: barbruth@comcast.net

Northampton hub - Found that two businesses they worked with to calculate savings under a single payer system would actually pay more under single payer. Their hypothesis is that these businesses currently have many employees who seek coverage under family plans offered by other entities. This sparked a lively conversation about other reasons businesses may be paying less now: increased cost-shifting to employees; offering cheaper policies with higher deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses. Labor groups are negotiating more and more on these cost-shifting issues.

Pioneer Valley PNHP (Physicians for a National Health Program) – Cathie Korey attended the national PNHP conference in Atlanta recently. Deborah gave her report: 250 medical providers and 60 students attended. There was much attention to social justice issues including a panel on health insurance and access to care among minority and ethnically diverse populations, and workshops such as “Effects of Mass Incarceration on Health” and “Structural Racism and Single Payer.” Some other workshops included “The Conservative and Business Cases for SP” and “Resolutions as a Tactic for SP.” The PV-PNHP chapter will meet again on Wed. Nov. 29th. More info and RSVP to Cathie Korey: cathiejk@gmail.com

Winter Tabling – Jane Allen, our WMM4A tabling coordinator, would like to organize teams for tabling at the indoor winter farmers markets held in various towns. Please contact her if you would like to participate: nellajpt11@gmail.com

STATEWIDE NEWS:

Report-back on **meeting with Rep. Kocot**, co-chair of HCF committee (where the Medicare for All bills currently await a decision by March 28, 2018): Kocot says he wants to get Single Payer out of committee, which would advance the debate to the legislature. He acknowledged the complexity of the problems and said that “little fixes” won’t work. He seemed unfamiliar, however, with the proposed financing plan in the Medicare for All bill and agreed to meet with Jerry Friedman about that. He stated his concern about new taxes SP would require, though our delegation pointed out that there would be large savings to offset that for most people. He also indicated that he was pursuing the possibility of a CHIA study, even without the benchmark bill. In addition, he will be organizing a forum in the spring to look at broad issues of the state’s health care system, though not necessarily about Single Payer.

Senate debate today on health care cost-cutting bill: Sen. Cyr submitted the benchmark bill as an amendment. It was then withdrawn (temporarily) for possible revisions.

UPDATE: A revised version of the benchmark amendment passed 35-3 on Thursday night; the whole bill passed later that same night. The revised amendment includes a comparison at different “cost-sharing” levels, among other changes. Attention on this now moves to the House. (The original “Benchmark bill” remains in the Health Care Financing committee.)

Lobby Day Nov. 14th: Discussion about carpooling. Suggestion for western Mass. folks to meet and stand together for the rally at noon, try to coordinate our lobby visits. Deborah will bring the WMM4A banner. Judy Atkins suggested we all keep track of the objections to Medicare for All that we hear from reps and staffers.

Statewide Single Payer Strategy Forum - This group of organizers from western Mass. and the Boston area will meet again on Dec. 2. Thanks to all who have sent feedback already about the draft proposals for longer-term action. Please continue to send feedback individually, or as a summary of discussions in your hub.

WMM4A MATTERS:

Film showings – Discussed how we can support the hubs planning to show “Fix It.” WMM4A can help with outreach and publicity, and suggest people to help lead Q&A afterwards. Hubs might also consider asking other supportive organizations to co-sponsor the showing.

There are other movies to consider showing, too. JR recommended “Now Is the Time” and passed a sign-up sheet for those who would like to receive a DVD. Another possibility is “The

Health Care Movie” – which is about the movement to win single payer in Canada, available at www.thehealthcaremovie.net. Please send us your reviews of these movies so we can share the information. WMM4A has not yet reviewed them.

George also reminded us that there is a tape of the forum held in Worthington last spring, which can be heard at <https://youtu.be/Ffwpl1MIVD4>.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, Dec. 13th