

## Summary of Sept. 13, 2017 WMM4A Meeting

About 30 people again participated in an energetic WMM4A monthly meeting, including some new folks, individuals, and representatives of active “hubs” in the region.

**Note: Mark your calendar for our next monthly meeting –Wed. October 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.**

### Local updates

Jon Weissman shared some thoughts about **Jafet Robles**, a widely-respected organizer with Neighbor to Neighbor in Springfield and beloved social justice leader. Robles, age 33, was murdered last week. Activists are calling for a thorough investigation into his killing. We observed a moment of silence in his memory. If you would like to contribute to a fund to assist Jafet’s family with memorial expenses, and with the remainder for his four children, here’s the link: <https://www.gofundme.com/jafet-legacy-fund> .

Rorry Zahourek reports that a **psychiatric nursing group** she’s involved with has been engaged and active on the issue of Medicare for All.

**The Jewish Community of Amherst Health Care Working Group** continues planning for a forum on Sunday, Nov. 5, 2:00-4:30 p.m. with a panel to include Sen. Eldridge, main Senate sponsor of the Medicare for All bills in Mass., Jon Weissman, Gerald Friedman, and Jackie Wolf. Publicity contact: Beth Eisenberg – [jubilada@icloud.com](mailto:jubilada@icloud.com).

**The Economic Justice Committee of N’ton Indivisible** announced that the Northampton City Resolution in support of Medicare for All in Mass. was officially passed at a second reading last week. The Committee plans to begin meeting soon with businesses with 20 or more employees to discuss their views on Single Payer and possible savings. For info and to get involved: Nancy Talanian – [ntalanian@gmail.com](mailto:ntalanian@gmail.com).

**The PVA Hub for Easthampton and Vicinity** will host a public meeting to introduce Medicare for All to their community on Tuesday, Sept. 19th, and will begin tabling on Saturday. For info or to get involved: Sara Weinberger – [saraweinberger128@gmail.com](mailto:saraweinberger128@gmail.com) .

**Franklin County Continuing the Political Revolution Single Payer Task Force** - FCCPR has endorsed several local candidates for Greenfield City Council and will work to help them get elected. The endorsements are for candidates who agree to support the FCCPR position on various issues – including Medicare for All in Massachusetts. Contact is Judy Atkins - [judithga@comcast.net](mailto:judithga@comcast.net) .

There was a good turnout at the **Medicare for All event at the Black Sheep Deli** in Amherst last week with presentations by Gerald Friedman and Jackie Wolf.

**The Worthington group** reported on a recent lobbying meeting with Rep. Steven Kulik, who cosponsors the Benchmark bill but not Medicare for All. They felt the meeting was positive and are awaiting some follow-up information from him.

Jane Allen, coordinator for **WMM4A tabling**, said that both the Forest Park and Northampton Farmers Market tables could use some additional help in October. If you would like to help at either of these tables, please contact Jane - [nellajpt11@gmail.com](mailto:nellajpt11@gmail.com) .

Jane also announced a **showing of “Fix It” and public discussion** at the Gaylord Public Library in South Hadley on Thursday, Oct. 19. Contact Jane - [nellajpt11@gmail.com](mailto:nellajpt11@gmail.com) .

*Update:* About a dozen medical professionals attended a meeting last night to discuss re-organizing a **Pioneer Valley chapter of PNHP** – Physicians for a National Health Program. For info and to get involved: Cathie Korey - [cathiejk@gmail.com](mailto:cathiejk@gmail.com) .

## STATE UPDATES

A local delegation will meet on Friday, Oct. 6 with **Rep. Kocot, new co-chair of the Health Care Financing Committee** where two Medicare for All bills are currently under review. They will report back at the Oct. 11 WMM4A meeting.

Several activists from WMM4A are among those who have planned and will gather for a **Strategy Roundtable in Worcester** on Saturday, Oct. 7 to draft a proposal to win Medicare for All in Mass. within three years. They will report back at the Oct. 11 WMM4A meeting for feedback and suggestions on the proposal.

Several groups in the Boston area including Mass-Care, Students for a National Health Program, and the MNA, are organizing a **Lobby Day for Medicare for All** on Nov. 14<sup>th</sup> at the Statehouse. More info as we hear.

Jackie Wolf reported that **Mass-Care** recently received a \$10,000 grant from the Ethical Society of Boston, and has added several new members to its Advisory Board. She also reported a good turnout at a recent **Single Payer event in Ayers Mass.** hosted by three Democratic City Committees.

## NATIONAL NEWS

**Bernie Sanders submitted a Single Payer bill** to the U.S. Senate this week. Before submitting the bill, Sanders made significant changes based on initial criticism from several national Single Payer advocacy organizations. For example, the original bill included co-pays and deductibles, while the final version omitted all out-of-pocket expenses except for some drugs (apparently to encourage the use of generics). Sixteen senators sponsored the bill before it was submitted, including both Mass. senators, Warren and Markey. Information about Sander’s bill can be found at <https://www.sanders.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/17-senators-introduce-medicare-for-all-act> - including links at the bottom of the page for a summary of the bill, and options for financing.

## ENDORSEMENTS

WMM4A agreed by consensus to endorse any **new town or city resolutions** developed by our hubs that conform to the templates used in Franklin County and Northampton in support of Mass. state Medicare for All bills. If the endorsement requires a decision before the next monthly meeting of the group, the soon-to-be-formed Steering Committee will make this decision.

WMM4A agreed by consensus to cosponsor the **March for Racial Justice in Holyoke**, Sunday, October 1, 12:30 p.m. beginning at Heritage State Park. We will bring the WMM4 banner and hope that many of you will march with us. Barbara Pearson will organize car-pooling. If you need a ride or can offer one, contact her: [bzpearson@gmail.com](mailto:bzpearson@gmail.com) . More info about this event on Facebook at March for Racial Justice and Massachusetts for Equality and Racial Justice. Links for flyers: [Cosponsor Holyoke M4RJ Flyers - English](#) & [Cosponsor Holyoke M4RJ Flyers - Spanish](#)

### **WMM4A Matters**

**The Health Care Action listserv** will soon be moved to a new system called **Action Network** which offers more functions to assist outreach. All current subscribers will be moved over automatically.

**NOTE:** We didn't discuss this at the meeting, but would like to again thank all of you who participated in the **recent survey**. We received 51 responses, almost all from new subscribers this year, which is about 20% of that group and a very good response rate. About 80% of respondents were satisfied with the amount and content of mailings, and the rest were "somewhat satisfied." Comments indicated that there are sometimes too many posts, however, and suggested that we try to consolidate these more. Nearly 100% of respondents said that they like receiving the monthly meeting summaries and updates about events and actions.

**WMM4A Steering Committee** – Jon and Deborah proposed forming a Steering Committee to help manage our growing network and to consider matters that arise between monthly meetings. The group agreed that this would be a good idea, and made several helpful suggestions: to keep the committee relatively small at around 5 or 6 members; to strive for geographic representation; to consider forming an interim committee as we figure out how this will work. It was agreed that Jon and Deborah will take these suggestions into consideration to form an initial committee.

It was also suggested that we **identify people with special skills** that would be helpful to WMM4A. Some skills that might be particularly helpful at this point are computer skills – such as Google group documents, Wordpress, Powerpoint, and general tech savvy; graphics; media and social media; video; fundraising, grantwriting; issue research; event coordination; etc. As you can see – many skills are useful!! Contact Deborah – [levendeb2@gmail.com](mailto:levendeb2@gmail.com)

*Summary written by Deborah Levenson*