

Summary – WMM4A Meeting, Dec. 13, 2017

About 26 people in attendance on a very cold night! Welcomed several new folks.

LOCAL UPDATES:

Jackie Wolf announced that she is resigning from Single Payer activities in Mass. to focus on preparations for a move to Michigan. Jackie has been a tireless public speaker across the state, leader of the Amherst League of Women Voters health care committee, and co-chair of Mass-Care. Several attendees praised Jackie's work and all applauded her. Western Mass. Medicare for All thanks Jackie for her tremendous contributions to the single payer movement and wishes her all the best.

Easthampton Hub will host a showing of Fix It with Q&A and discussion afterwards on Saturday Jan. 13th, 3:00-5:00 p.m. at the Eastworks building in Easthampton. Sara informed us that the Fix It website includes a service to help produce a flyer for showings. WMM4A agreed to co-sponsor the event which is free and open to the public. More info: Sara Weinberger - spw128@comcast.net

Pioneer Valley Democratic Socialists of America (PVDSA), a WMM4A hub, will host a lecture by Tim Faust on Saturday Jan. 6th. Faust has presented on the topic of Medicare for All to many DSA chapters and at the DSA national convention this year. Event is at Gateway City Arts in Holyoke, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. WMM4 agreed to co-sponsor the event which is free and open to the public. Contact: Chris Martin - craymartin90@gmail.com

The new **Pioneer Valley chapter of PNHP** (Physicians for a National Health Program) held its second meeting last month. The group will be arranging for a national PNHP speaker to address the March meeting of the Society of Hospital Medicine. They also discussed arranging for Single Payer presentations for "Grand Rounds" at area hospitals. Contact: Cathie Korey - cathiejkc@gmail.com

The Amherst hub based at the Jewish Community of Amherst has been discussing an expansion to include single payer activists throughout the Amherst area. If you would like to get involved, contact Barbara Burkart - barbruth@comcast.net

Tabling at Winter Farmers' Markets - Jane Allen is coordinating this effort for WMM4A and invites anyone interested to contact her at nellajpt11@gmail.com

Lathrop Community in Northampton will host a showing of "Now's the Time" on Friday, Dec. 15th at 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Update: Great turnout for the movie and discussion afterwards with Deborah and Jon. Lots of good questions, sign-ups to stay informed about WMM4A activities, and positive feedback about the movie, which has a focus on activism as well as information. This is the first time we've shown "Now's the Time" locally.

Women's March – Saturday, Jan. 20th – 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Northampton march and rally in coordination with other actions across the country, one year after the massive national marches in Jan. 2017. WMM4A agreed by consensus to co-sponsor this event and to participate. Contact: Lindsay Sabadosa - lsabadosa@gmail.com

STATEWIDE MATTERS:

Cost-comparison Study – Discussed updates about the so-called “Benchmark bill” which was attached, with revisions, to a recently-passed Senate health care cost-containment bill. The amendment calls for **a study comparing the total cost of health care in the state with the cost under a proposed single- payer system**. Attention now shifts to the House, which is expected to draft its own health care cost-containment bill in the coming months.

In addition, the original Benchmark bill (S610) remains in the Health Care Financing committee, along with the actual **single-payer bill: “An Act to Establish Medicare for All in Mass”** (S619). A delegation organized by Western Mass. Medicare for All will meet for the second time with Rep. Peter Kocot on Dec. 18th and report back next month. Kocot is the House co-chair of the HCF committee.

Single Payer Strategy Forum - This is the statewide group of organizers from Western Mass. and the Boston area working on a longer-term strategy to win Medicare for All in the state. The second meeting of SPSF on Dec. 2nd focused on grassroots movement-building/ messaging, labor organizing, and legislative tactics. One strategy discussed is to run **non-binding ballot questions** (BQs) in targeted districts in 2018. In Western Mass., these might include a BQ in Kulik's district; possibly Kocot's; and perhaps one or more in Hampden County. Another possibility would be to run a municipal BQ in Springfield in 2019. (Municipal elections only occur in odd years.) SPSF is also beginning discussions with Raise Up Massachusetts (RUM) to **consider running a binding statewide ballot initiative on Single Payer in 2020**. RUM is currently organizing the Fight for \$15 and Paid Family & Medical Leave initiatives.

Safe Staffing ballot initiative by the Mass. Nurses Association (MNA) – MNA representative Nancy Stenberg briefly explained “The Patient Safety Act” (www.patientsafetyact.com). She then asked if WMM4A would endorse the MNA's effort to advance this legislation. A new attendee at the meeting, Christine Schrauf, commented that the MNA approach to staffing is different than the one promoted by an organization she belongs to, the American Nurses Association (ANA) (<http://info.nursingworld.org/staffingwp/>). Nancy offered to present the research behind the MNA initiative, and Chris said she also had research but would have to prepare. It was decided to postpone the discussion until next month when both Nancy and Chris would have the opportunity to briefly present.

Next Meetings: Wed. January 10th and Wed. Feb. 7th. NOTE: We changed the February date to the first Wed. instead of our usual second Wed. due to Valentine's Day!