

Summary - WMM4A Monthly Meeting, April 11, 2018

Please note: You can now **DONATE ONLINE** to Western Mass. Medicare for All on our secure website at www.wmMedicareforall.org. Click on “Donate” in the menu to contribute by check, credit card or PayPal. We have been relying on generous cash donations by folks who attend our monthly meetings to cover basic costs – copying, website, listserv, and so forth. As we ramp up our activity this spring, **your donation will help sustain the organization and expand our educational and outreach efforts**. Many thanks to Nancy Talanian, our new WMM4A Treasurer, for setting up the online donation page.

UPCOMING TRAININGS to gather signatures for non-binding ballot questions:

Sunday, April 15th - 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Location: Home of Barbara Burkart, 92 Aubinwood Road, Amherst

Contact: Barbara Burkart - barbruth@comcast.net

Saturday, April 21st – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Holyoke, TBA (contact Chris)

Contact: Chris Martin - craymartin90@gmail.com

Tuesday, April 17th – 7:00 p.m. -- FIX IT showing and Q&A at the Meekins Library in Williamsburg. Panelists include physicians Chris Flory and Pete Siersma, and Deborah L from WMM4A. Contact: info@wmMedicareforall.org

Friday, May 4th – 7:00 p.m. “Voices of Working People’s History.” A wonderfully dramatic and informative spoken word and musical program. Holyoke Heritage State Park, 221 Appleton St., Holyoke. Contact: Jon Weissman – jon@gogtt.net

Springfield Update:

Jon W is at a meeting tonight with a group of **Medicare for All advocates in Springfield** to begin planning for a larger outreach event this spring. This is a follow-up to a program last month when more than a dozen Springfield-area activists and organizers heard from Sen. Eldridge and several other panelists. The coordinating group for these events includes Jon and Deborah from WMM4A, and folks from the League of Women Voters Springfield chapter, and Jobs with Justice. WMM4A applied for and recently received a \$2500 grant from the Markham-Nathan Fund to help fund the Springfield organizing. **Many thanks to the Markham-Nathan Fund** for their generous support.

SUPPORT MNA NURSES:

WMM4A has endorsed the MNA’s **statewide binding ballot initiative to set safe staffing ratios** at hospitals. Polling is strongly in favor of the initiative at this point. The nurses must soon collect an additional 10,000 signatures to put this question on the ballot in November. **If you would like to help** – phone banks, lawn signs, etc. – contact Nancy Stenberg: nstenberg06@gmail.com

Safe staffing is also one of the key issues in a prolonged, contentious contract dispute between the nurses at Baystate Franklin Medical Center and Baystate. The National Labor Relations Board recently ruled in favor of the nurses regarding several claims of unfair labor practices. **MNA nurses held a legal 24-hour strike beginning 7 a.m. today (Wed. April 11) – but Baystate management locked them out of the hospital for three full days** starting Tues. at 7:00 p.m. Patients at the hospital are being cared for by temps unfamiliar with the staff, community, and protocols of the hospital. Rally times and other actions this week were discussed at the WMM4A meeting.

SUPPORT health benefits for adjunct teachers:

Health benefits are a critical issue for “adjunct” teachers who teach a large proportion of classes at community colleges and public universities in Mass. but are currently ineligible for health benefits even if they teach two or more 3-credit courses each semester. New legislation would provide that benefit. **If we had Single Payer in Mass, this would not even be an issue! But it IS a critical issue now. Please call your state legislators and ask them to push for passage of HB 4153 – “An Act Investing in Higher Education”** –before the end of this legislative session in July. The bill is currently in the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing – yes, the same committee that is sitting on our Medicare for All bills. **Call co-chair Sen. Welch about HB 4153** – 617.722.1660 in Boston; 413.737.7756 in Springfield - and remind him at the same time that this is another reason why we need Medicare for All now.

NON-BINDING BALLOT QUESTIONS supporting SINGLE PAYER:

The following hubs are coordinating the effort to get non-binding ballot questions about single payer on the November ballot in several districts in western Mass:

Franklin County CPR – Districts currently represented by Paul Mark and Steve Kulik.
Easthampton hub – John Scibak’s district
Northampton – District formerly represented by Peter Kocot
Holyoke – Aaron Vega’s district
Amherst – Goldstein-Rose’s district

There are a couple more districts in western Mass. we may be able to target as well. There will also be at least a dozen other BQs in metro-Boston districts. Statewide, the **Single Payer Strategy Forum** is coordinating these efforts. We had an extended and lively discussion of logistics and suggestions about how to collect signatures, and so forth. This is a coordinated effort and we will be helping each other. After the signature-gathering period in May, we’ll begin to organize a broad campaign to educate voters about Medicare for All and build support for the BQs in November.

To get involved with this campaign, please contact us at info@wmMedicareforall.org.

To help with tabling at farmers’ markets and other locations this spring and summer, contact:
Jane Allen - nellajpt11@gmail.com

NEXT WMM4A MEETING: Wed. May 9th at 6:30 p.m.