

SUMMARY: WMM4A MONTHLY MEETING, NOV. 14, 2018

UPDATES

There was a good turnout at the *Fix It* showing and panel in Chesterfield, with about 50 people attending. A few new members were recruited for the Hilltown hub, which considered this first public event of theirs to be quite a success.

Beth Eisenberg reminded us that she will be out of state Dec. through May, but will stay in touch with WMM4A during that time. She also announced that in her absence, Larry Cervelli will take over as head of the Hilltown hub, and as the hub's representative to the Steering Committee.

Patty Healey set up a Medicare for All table at the recent statewide MNA conference, with posters, literature, and sign-up sheets. There was interest in the issue, though the strong focus for most in attendance was, of course, Ballot Question 1. Many thanks to Patty for reaching out to the nurses at the conference!

Three other *Fix It* showings were held before the election – in Florence, Whately, and South Hadley. Attendance was modest at these events, but the Q&As were enthusiastic, and the local hubs will follow-up with those in attendance. Then-candidate (now state Rep.) Natalie Blais attended the showing in Whately.

Chris Martin reported that following the positive outcome on Question 4 in Holyoke, Rep. Aaron Vega responded to an email indicating that he would now be co-sponsoring the Medicare for All bill in Mass. when it is resubmitted in January.

The South Hadley/Granby hub is planning a two-part training: part one with Deborah L about M4A, state legislation and organizing strategy; part two with Jerry Friedman for a deeper dive into economic questions.

DISCUSSION ABOUT QUESTION 4 AND NEXT STEPS

We discussed the success of Question 4 which passed in every town in which it ran, with an overall “yes” vote of nearly 77% across all six legislative districts. Lots of work by many people led to this victory – collecting signatures in the spring; outreach at candidate events before the primary; public education events; media efforts, including radio spots on WHMP during the week before the election; letters to the editor; canvassing for several months in Holyoke; several radio interviews; Q4 representation on ballot forums; ongoing visibility efforts including sign-holding before the election, and at polls on Election Day. Congratulations to all and many thanks to those of you who gave time and energy to this campaign!

It was noted that while support for Q4 in our region is obviously strong, the question also ran with no mobilized opposition. WMM4A always keeps in mind likely opposition arguments as we develop our literature, outreach, and trainings, and we will continue to strengthen our work in this area.

In addition to passing Question 4, another goal of the campaign was to build the movement for Single Payer in Western Mass. and to attract more advocates to work with WMM4A and our hubs. We had a useful discussion about this, with agreement that our public education programs should have a stronger focus on organizing, and on information about M4A at the state level. More people need to be trained in those areas, especially those who want to help with public events. Presentation teams should always include at least one person with an organizing perspective and good familiarity with the state-level legislation.

Other areas people mentioned as possible “next steps” for hub work: connecting with newly-elected representatives for grassroots lobbying; resolutions by municipal governments; talking with business owners; continued work in Springfield; “passive messaging” such as bumper stickers (needs fundraising); connecting with Democratic Town Committees about being more active on Single Payer (it is in the Democratic platform); getting info about the new M4A bill when it’s submitted in January, 2019.

Update: Another suggestion was to set up a group email for hub leaders so they can discuss questions / problems / ideas of common interest. This has been done.

WMM4A STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Discussed a draft document developed by the WMM4A Steering Committee (SC) to clarify the structure and governance of WMM4A. The document outlines the roles and responsibilities of SC, local Hubs, and the General Assembly (GA) - those who convene for our monthly meetings. The SC is the main coordinating body for WMM4A, comprised of the two Co-conveners and a representative from each hub. A hub is the basic units of grassroots, neighbor-to-neighbor outreach, and associated with a specific state legislative district. The GA meets monthly for general discussion, exchange among the hubs and individuals in attendance, and to decide broad questions about the direction of WMM4A.

Overall, the GA liked the proposed structure. There were a few concerns that the SC will review before bringing a revised proposal back to the GA for approval. These included a concern that the SC could grow too large and unwieldy as we develop more hubs. There was also a discussion about the level for “modified consensus” decision-making at the GA: the SC had proposed an 85% level of agreement, but some felt that was too high and suggested a 2/3 or 3/4 level instead. Another suggestion was that we set a quorum.

NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, DEC. 12