

Summary – WMM4A General Assembly, April 10, 2019

Important: The next meeting of the WMM4A General Assembly will be **Wed. May 8th at a NEW LOCATION: [The Mass. Green High Performance Computing Center at 100 Bigelow Street in Holyoke.](#)** This is a more central location in our current outreach area, and more accessible for the newer hubs in Hampden County and lower Hampshire County. Parking is convenient in a large lot in front of the building and the meeting room itself is comfortable and well-equipped. For those of you who will need to drive a bit further, we hope you will support this effort to make the meetings as accessible as possible for everyone involved with WMM4A. Meeting time at 6:30 p.m. Questions: info@wmMedicareforall.org.

EVERYBODY: We need volunteers to help with outreach at the Northampton Pride March on Sat. May 4th. This is a huge opportunity to reach out to the community! Please see details below.

ACTION ALERT: Please support the launch of a Holyoke City Council Resolution on May 7th. See rally details below.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY: May 16th workshop in Greenfield about advocating for Medicare for All – see details below.

Local Updates and Events

Thursday, April 25, 6:30 p.m. at the South Hadley Public Library: a showing of Fix It with Q&A. Hosted by the Granby/South Hadley hub, with special outreach to SH Town Meeting members who will be voting on a Medicare for All Resolution at Town Meeting on May 8th. An event to inform Town Meeting members about all of the warrant articles will be held on **Wednesday, May 1st at SH Town Hall.** WMM4A reps will be present to respond to questions about the M4A resolution. Contact: Stephanie: strandfamily01075sh@gmail.com

Tuesday, April 30, 6:30 pm at the United Congregational Church of Ashfield, 429 Main Street in Ashfield. Showing of the film “Fix It” with Q&A to follow. Sponsored by the Hilltown Hub of WMM4A. Contact Beth: jubilada@icloud.com

Saturday, May 4th starting at 11:00 a.m. Northampton Pride March from Old South Street to the Fairgrounds. WMM4A will be talking to folks along the route about Medicare for All, handing out flyers and stickers, and signing folks up for our listserv. We had a great reception last year when we canvassed for the ballot question and look forward to another great opportunity to reach out to the community. **Please volunteer to help!** Contact Miriam: mkb@valleymediation.com

Tuesday, May 7th at 6:30 p.m. RALLY at Holyoke City Hall, 536 Dwight Street. The Single Payer ballot question passed in Holyoke with 67% of the vote and now we are urging the City Council

to echo that support for Medicare for All. Organized by the Holyoke Hub and PVDSA. Contact Chris: craymartin90@gmail.com

Thursday, May 16th, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. at 170 Main Street, Greenfield. Sojourner Truth School workshop: “Healthcare is a Human Right: Effective Advocacy for Single Payer in Massachusetts.” The trainer is Beth Eisenberg, Training Coordinator for WMM4A and a retired social worker. Information and to reserve a space: www.truthschool.org.

Tuesday, May 28, 1:00 -3:00 p.m. at the Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street. Fix It showing with Q&A to follow. Hosted by the Northampton Hub. Contact Jane: nellajpt11@gmail.com

The Easthampton Hub is reviewing summer events for tabling, such as Cultural Chaos on June 8th and the music festival in town. The hub is also working with a member of their City Council to introduce a SP resolution in the fall. Rep. Carey will attend the hub meeting in May. The Granby/South Hadley hub will also attend that meeting, as both hubs are in Rep. Carey’s district.

The Amherst Hub is also considering tabling venues for the summer. They have begun to reach out to their Town Council members about a SP resolution.

State and National Updates

Mayors for Medicare for All – a new initiative launched by Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse. WMM4A reps will be meeting with Mayor Morse and Rep. Sabadosa to discuss the roll-out of this initiative both in Western Mass. and across the state. There are 47 mayors in Massachusetts.

The new **Medicare for All Legislative Caucus** met for the first time in April. There was a great turnout of legislators and legislative staff who crowded the room to discuss M4A and how they can help advance the legislation on Beacon Hill. The Caucus is also discussing how to structure and fund an updated study of the costs and savings of a state Single Payer system, and the impact of SP on different constituencies such as business owners and households at different income levels.

A **Boston-area M4A meeting** is planned for May 19th to be hosted by Mass-Care, Health-Care Now! and the Boston chapter of DSA. The purpose is to bring together activists working on Medicare for All and plan a campaign for the Boston area, including setting up hubs in different legislative districts. The meeting will take place at the office shared by Mass-Care and the national organization, Health-Care Now! Reps from WMM4A will attend the meeting to share our experience developing the model for hubs here in western Mass. and to discuss the state campaign.

Drug prices - Discussed briefly the April 11 statehouse hearing on a panoply of bills related to high drug costs and the lack of transparency in drug pricing. Governor Baker also submitted a proposal to bring down Mass-Health drug costs, and the House has since discussed that proposal as part of their budget meetings. The biotech industry lobbied hard against Baker's proposal and Rep. Mariano (perhaps next in line as Speaker of the House) led the effort to weaken it:

"... the governor's proposal doesn't really create that cooperative relationship between the pharmaceutical relationship [sic] and the HPC [Health Policy Commission]. It makes it into more of a – and I hate to use this term – a potential rate-setting body . . . So it is my hope that we can take what the governor viewed as an idea to help control some of the pharmaceutical costs for Mass-Health and ... mitigate and change it a little bit and make it an opportunity to work toward solutions with an industry [biotech] we helped create."

National Update

Sen. Sanders recently submitted his new Medicare for All bill. This time the bill includes **Long Term Care coverage**, as seniors and disability advocates had urged. Such advocates were part of the team that developed the House bill which set the standard for inclusion of Long Term Care.

Recent announcement: The House Rules Committee, chaired by Rep. McGovern, will hold the first-ever **Congressional hearing on Medicare for All on April 30th** starting at 10:00 a.m. The Huffington Post reported that the witness list does not include any nationally recognized advocates for Single Payer even though such speakers had been recommended. According to HP, some advocates believe the hearing may be a "farce" that will actually downplay M4A.

WMM4A Matters

The Steering Committee has had a full agenda: working with a graphic artist on logo sketches based on the GA conversation a few months ago; developing a "guiding principles" document to present to the GA soon; and consolidating a basic educational framework to guide our advocacy work.

WMM4A has purchased a "Zoom" account to facilitate regional and statewide communication.