

SUMMARY – WMM4A GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OCT. 10, 2019

LOCAL UPDATES:

Mass. Nurses Assn. Trainings – The MNA Labor School is hosting a 2-hour training about Medicare for All in each of its five division areas – in Boston, Worcester, Cape Cod, Northampton, and North Shore. Patty Healy will be leading the training in Northampton. Contact Patty: phealey17@gmail.com.

American Nurses Assn. Forum – Report-back on the Oct. 1 forum at the Statehouse. Sen. Eldridge gave an introductory speech, but overall there was not as much focus on Single Payer from the panel as had been hoped. Local ANA folks would like to have another event in the spring, possibly in western Mass., with more focus on SP.

Granby/ S. Hadley Hub – Will be hosting a Slideshow and Discussion about the Mass. Medicare for All bill – **Thursday, Nov. 7th, at 6:30 p.m. at the S. Hadley Public Library, 2 Canal Street.** The hub also reported an enthusiastic audience at their recent showing of Fix-it in Granby with several new sign-ups. Contact Stephanie: strandfamily01075sh@gmail.com

Springfield Area Hub – reported they sent out a survey to City Council and Mayoral candidates about their views on M4A. Several replied, strongly supporting M4A, but there were not as many responses as had been hoped. Contact Jon: jon@gogtt.net

Easthampton Hub – Asks us for support when their M4A Resolution is introduced at the Easthampton City Council on **Wed. Nov. 6 (6:00 p.m. at E'ton City Hall) and again on Wed. Nov. 20 when the final vote is taken (rally at 5:30 p.m).** They've arranged for speakers at both events. Contact Sara: spw128@comcast.net

Amherst Hub – The M4A Town Council Resolution is temporarily on hold in order to respond to pushback from some of the Council members. Contact Anita: asarro05@gmail.com

Northampton Hub – will host two upcoming events: a slideshow training about the Mass. M4A bill on Oct. 15th and a public education event at the Northampton Senior Center on Oct. 22nd. Contact Nancy: ntalanian@gmail.com

Labor Alliance - Report back on the Sept. 27 “listening session” in Holyoke with labor leaders and the Mass. M4A bill sponsors, Sen. Eldridge and Rep. Sabadosa. WMM4A folks helped organize this event. A good turnout, good questions and discussion. Several of us will propose a Health Committee for the new Area Labor Federation as a forum to continue this discussion. The bill sponsors intend to replicate the model for these listening sessions in other parts of the state.

STATE AND NATIONAL UPDATES:

National Single Payer Conference in Portland, OR (Oct. 18-20) – Jon Weissman has helped organize a workshop on “base-building” and will be on that panel. He'll share the model we've developed here in Western Mass. with local hubs and regional coordination.

Tabling at Town Halls - Congressional candidate Alex Morse has scheduled several Town Halls with a focus on Medicare for All. WMM4A will table at these events in N. Adams (10-24) and in Holyoke (10-28). As a non-profit organization, WMM4A cannot endorse candidates, but we can provide educational information about the candidates and the issues.

M4A Legislative Caucus - The Caucus has been meeting monthly at the statehouse, and we have also been having monthly calls with the Caucus leadership and reps from WMM4A and Mass-Care. Two of the Caucus leaders, Sen. Eldridge and Rep. Sabadosa, have been holding public events about M4A in their districts and encouraging other legislators to do the same. In the eastern part of the state, Sen. Eldridge has recently spoken at events in Acton and Needham; locally Rep. Sabadosa held an M4A event in Southampton; Rep. Paul Mark held a Fix-It event in Dalton.

Mass-Care - Several new members were recently recruited for the Mass-Care board. These new members are younger and more diverse than most of the current board and have organizing experience. Hopefully, this will lead to more M4A activism at the state level.

WMM4A MATTERS

Steering Committee Retreat – Scheduled for Sat. Oct. 26th. This will be an opportunity for us to assess the achievements and challenges of WMM4A over the past couple of years, and to set priorities for the next year.

Training Segment - Another lively discussion on key questions in the M4A movement. Tonight we discussed “Why is WMM4A focusing on the State level?” Here are some of the points folks brought up:

- More likely to pass at the state level first.
- State work is more immediate, can go deeper at the local level, can assess effectiveness of different organizing models.
- In Canada, Medicare started in Saskatchewan Province.
- Successes at the state level will build support for the National level.
- States can be the “laboratory” to try out innovations – that’s why the federal govt. grants waivers for other public programs.
- Mass. has been the leader for other national programs – the ACA was largely modeled after Mass. “Romneycare.”
- Mass. has led on other social issues – such as anti-slavery, child labor laws, and public education. Gay marriage started here at state level, then to other states and the national.
- Mass. has a relatively low proportion of uninsured people and relatively high income, so a good candidate for success at the state level. It is also one of the most unequal states in the country, so there’s a great need for equity.
- There is an immediate crisis and we can’t afford to wait for the national bill to pass. It’s a moral imperative to begin here and now.

- The movement can work on both levels at once – state and national – and see where the traction builds.

NEXT MEETING: Wed. Nov. 13th at 20 Hampton Ave. in Northampton.

(Note: we'll be returning to our meeting space in Holyoke in 2020.)