

## SUMMARY – WMM4A GENERAL ASSEMBLY – MARCH 11, 2020

### Local updates:

The following events related to M4A have been **CANCELLED** or **POSTPONED** due to concern about COVID-19:

- March 16<sup>th</sup> forum hosted by Indivisible Northampton has been postponed.
- March 25<sup>th</sup> conference planned by the American Nurses Association and the UMASS College of nursing has been cancelled. The presenters may turn it into a webinar at a later date.
- March 27<sup>th</sup> event addressing M4A and public health, hosted by the UMASS School of Public Health, has been postponed.

**Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. - The Springfield Area hub of WMM4A will be meeting ONLINE as a “Zoom” conference call.** You can join the meeting by phoning in or with an audio or video connection using your computer or mobile device. It's not hard to do! Contact Jon to RSVP and for details about joining the call: [jon@gogtt.net](mailto:jon@gogtt.net)

The Springfield Area hub is organizing **three showings of the film “Fix It” on the same date - Wed. April 29<sup>th</sup>.** The purpose of this coordinated outreach effort will be to engage new folks in the work of the hub, including lobbying visits with Reps. Buddy Williams and Angelo Puppolo. Contact Jon: [jon@gogtt.net](mailto:jon@gogtt.net)

WMM4A is coordinating a **lobbying visit with Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier** at her district office in Pittsfield on Monday, 3/30 with a group of her constituents. She is the co-chair of the state legislature's Progressive Caucus and the only Berkshire County rep. who has not yet signed on to the state's M3A bill. Contact Jon: [jon@gogtt.net](mailto:jon@gogtt.net)

UMass. Prof. Gerald Friedman has published a new book: **The Case for Medicare for All.** Ask your local independent book seller to order it now!

### Discussion about national election:

An interesting discussion about the ramifications of the election for our M4A work at the state level. We compared the impact if Trump, Sanders, or Biden wins the election in November. Although strategy and challenges would differ depending on the administration, there was a consensus that regardless of the outcome, it would be most effective to continue our focus on passing legislation at the state level. We also briefly discussed Rep. Ro Khanna's bill that would facilitate federal support for M4A work at the state level.

### Discussion about M4A and COVID-19 (coronavirus):

With the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S., the need for M4A has never been clearer. Here are some points from the discussion:

- With our current system, many people who are uninsured and underinsured will not seek testing and treatment.
- The pandemic is showing us that we are each only as safe as the most vulnerable members of society.
- M4A promotes community solidarity and the values of empathy and compassion.
- Caring for others is also in one's own self-interest
- The values and infrastructure of a Single Payer system are in alignment with public health priorities: universal coverage, coordination of data and resources, attention to equity.
- With M4A, there is an incentive to focus on prevention and public health – unlike the current system.
- Consistency of coverage, training and protocols, best practices with M4A.
- With M4A, health care policy is geared toward health care, not profit.
- All the red tape of our current system delays health care.
- Will the public end up subsidizing private insurers for doing the “right thing” under pressure now?

We also discussed what we can do to take advantage of this “teachable moment.” Folks thought it was important to discuss M4A at this time, and did not see it as being “opportunistic” to do so. Some suggestions were to develop talking points that could be used for education and lobbying; create a handout; write an Opinion piece for the newspaper or Letters to the Editor; pose the question: “How would this crisis be different if we had M4A?”

### WMM4A Matters:

The Steering Committee is working on a new organizational structure for WMM4A based on active Project Areas, rather than standing hubs. The Steering Committee would vet each new Project according to its relevance to the mission of WMM4A, the interest and capacity of one or more persons to coordinate, and a clear proposal for action. What would be the role of the General Assembly? It would probably focus more on training and public education, perhaps meeting less often than once per month. The SC will continue to work on these changes and report back as soon as possible.

