



It's Time to Add Your Voice

PNHPWW June Meeting and Monthly Report

16 people attended. Clearly, Wednesdays are better given the many emails describing conflicts, and feedback at the meeting. Fortunately, we have secured the 4th Wednesday of July (23rd) and August (27th) for our next two meetings.

Coordinator's Report

Email list – 391 (after removing repeated bouncers)
Treasury - \$1808.97

Recent Activities:

Healthy Washington Coalition 6/19 Health Care Caucus Report.

We play a part in planning and supporting the HWC public caucuses, the first of which occurred on 6/19. By all accounts it was a big success. More than 300 people turned out to discuss the values they thought most important in health care reform legislation (see PNHPWW website for photos). This important meeting brought together lots of different organizations with the same goal of providing health care for ALL Washingtonians. Much credit goes to Robby Stern, HWC President, who has been working tirelessly to ensure the fulfillment of the opportunity these meetings present. Robby's lifetime leadership on social justice issues across the spectrum continues on, with even more time commitment now, given his recent retirement. His assessment on the public participation part of the program was that "the discussion of the values was heart felt, insightful, passionate, and articulate. It could have gone on longer but many many people got the opportunity to speak." See HWC press release reporting on meeting - attached

Although not focused on the 5 specific reform proposals in the Health Care Working Group legislation study, it was very encouraging to single-payer advocates in that many speakers spontaneously praised single payer to

enthusiastic audience response, and that SP was the overwhelming favorite solution of the participants. This was spontaneous from the crowd, not orchestrated by SP organization members who attended. The take-home is that at least for the range of citizens interested enough to spend an evening at a health care reform event, and likely to volunteer for “grassroots” organizing, “single-payer” is not a term to be avoided.

The next round of public meetings after the economic/quality analysis study is completed early next year will focus on the 5 specific proposals. There will be at least one meeting in each Congressional District, This round will be financed by the HCWG legislation and should draw significant attention from our legislators and media. What a great opportunity for SP advancement afforded by these events.

Upcoming Activities

- 1. HWC Tacoma Health Care Caucus, July 1st** (see PNHPWW website for details)
- 2. Health Care for America NOW rollout – July 8th** - WaCAN coordinated event – see below discussion

Summer Intern possibilities follow-up – One person expressed initial interest in the summer intern project. What we need most is to organize & update our state database of supporters of the single-payer solution. National PNHP has given us several hundred names scattered across the state, but this list is outdated. We would like to do an upgrade this summer to better organize our potential resources, statewide by cities and ZIP codes, for the coming campaigns. We would work together with HCFA – Wa

News flash - Dennis Kucinich called Larry Kalb, President of HCFA-Wa, expressing that he would like to come out this way “to help build a fire under our supporters for single-payer and HR 676.” Larry is taking the lead on this possibility. Stay tuned.

Speakers Seminar –Several prior emails and at least half the people attending the meeting expressed interest in attending a speakers’ training seminar. We envision a weekend half- or all-day session in September, for 6-10 people willing to make a commitment to speak at a public event. We will put together a curriculum on how to target and frame the SP message for different audiences

and the use of current literature and PNHP & other slideshows. We can solicit the experience from other PNHP chapters that have staged such seminars.

General Discussion:

The US Conference of Mayors Resolution on NHI (HR676) – This organization just passed a SP NHI support resolution including the following language:

WHEREAS, Harvard researchers estimate that more than \$300 billion could be recovered by replacing private insurance companies with a single public payer, enough to cover the uninsured and to improve coverage for all those who now have only partial coverage; and

WHEREAS, as of the date of this resolution, the majority of American physicians (59%) believe that Single Payer is the best method of securing universal healthcare; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors expresses its support for The United States National Health Insurance Act (H.R. 676), and calls upon federal legislators to work towards its immediate enactment, ...

for the full resolution:

http://www.pnhp.org/news/2008/june/united_states_confer.php

The question came up as to whether Mayor Nickels supported the resolution. I have placed an enquiry to his office. We need to find out and if he did, publicize the fact. Supporters in other cities in WW should do the same.

iMedExchange – This is a new web-based organization set up to provide intercommunication between physicians across the country on any number of topics. They have asked PNHPWW to participate with a web page and recruit members. It could be anything we wanted it to be that we thought useful – video, blogs, forums on healthcare reform, the SP approach, etc. The negatives are that only physicians can gain access, uncontrollable ads would appear on the right side of the page as per Google (for UnitedHealthcare??), and that it would require some work and oversight to make it useful. On the other hand it would add easy multimedia capability and be a potential site to bring in new SP

supporters. No action taken. The best course at this point might be to have MD/DO supporters check out the potential at <https://www.imedexchange.com>

Coalitions & PNHPWW Discussion

To repeat the message on the email – “This summer and fall there is going to be a lot of opportunity to work with coalitions to take advantage of the convergence of the increasingly disturbing daily news about health care access, costs, and quality and its effects on Americans, and the upcoming elections. There is a tremendous amount of energy out there. We had some preliminary discussion of three coalitions and the need to define principles to determine who we will partner with and how much resources we should commit, given the coalitions’ need for financial and person-power support. In the desire to attract the large grassroots base, necessary for the muscle to achieve real reform, coalitions may still concede an important role for the insurance industry. We need to figure out principles of unity we can live with.”

Specifically, we briefly discussed organizations we have worked with and others we may decide are a good fit:

Healthy Washington Coalition – We are already a member of this broad-based coalition and, so far, have been impressed with the potential for advancing SP, although HWC also supports some incrementalist solutions (that we don’t have to endorse).

Universal Health Care Action Network - UHCAN - UHCAN’s priority is to build a broad coalition, but is more attuned to the position that market-based solutions are incompatible with meaningful health care reform. To this end, they are organizing around a Unity Statement, “spring(ing) from our firm conviction that **to build the political power needed to achieve health reform consistent with the IOM principles, we must build strong grassroots organizing capacity at the local and state levels, as well as nationally.** Fortunately, underlying all the policy diversity in the health care justice movement there is a common belief that: *affordable, quality health care for all will never be attainable using market forces.*”

Jeff Huebner and I put together the following statement for UHCAN:

We in the Western Washington Chapter of PNHP are committed to unite with other health justice groups in the common effort to build the grass roots

strength and political power necessary to establish a health care system consistent with the Institute of Medicine's principles for a high performing, equitable health care system. We believe unity is critical for us to refute the value of the market in health care and replace it with the value of health care for all. We believe we can replace "everyone for one" with "all for one, one for all."

Health Care for America NOW – This is a new very broad-based national coalition – “Our government’s responsibility is to guarantee quality affordable health care for everyone in America and it must play a central role in regulating, financing, and providing health....” A number of progressive and left-wing , as well as some specifically supporting SP, have signed on despite this statement – “ensuring a choice of a private insurance plan, including keeping the insurance you have if you like it, or a public insurance plan without a private insurer middleman that guarantees affordable coverage.” Check it out at <http://healthcareforamericanow.com/>

On July 8th, there is a national public launch for the HCAW campaign, with events held in Washington DC and in at least 35 states around the country. Washington CAN! is coordinating the Washington state launch. WaCAN! Is planning an action outside an insurance company headquarters to be announced at the last minute – “What the event will look like: One of the prevailing themes in the national campaign is to animate anger at the insurance industry. We want to frame a choice for the public and elected officials in which they must "pick a side." Do we want a solution in which all of us – individuals, employers, and government share responsibility for guaranteeing access to health care we all can count on? Or a scenario in which we are on our own with the insurance industry when it comes to getting health care?”

We agreed we should focus on coalitions in our July 23rd PNHPWW meeting.

John Stossell’s Healthcare in America 20/20 program – We viewed 20 minutes of video excerpts of this TV program. It’s a advertisement for market-based CDHC solutions blessed by the Galen & Cato Institutes and the American Health Insurance Plans trade organization. All the usual myths regarding fundamental HC reform and the superiority of markets forces and the need for profit in health care were presented as if already obvious. “We have the best health care in the world” and that’s why all the Canadians and (superrich & famous) foreigners come here for care. Lots of outrageously false and misleading information.

The focus of our July meeting will be principles of coalition, the public insurance/private insurance competition theory supported by the democratic candidates and many of our progressive friends who see it as a stage to single payer, and use of the term “single-payer” itself.

Next meeting – Wednesday July 23th, 7-8:30pm, Swed/Prov/Cherry Hill Conference Center – directions:
(http://www.pnhpwesternwashington.org/PAGES/swed_prov_directions.htm)
Health Care for America NOW Campaign

New PNHPWW Lending Library addition – George Lakoff’s “Don’t Think of an Elephant: Know your Values and Frame the Debate” – email request to borrow