



Health Care for All-Washington Newsletter

An Information Pipeline for Members and Friends of Health Care for All-Washington

Spring 2017

Repeal? Replace? Medicare for All? Forget the Whole Thing? Where Is the ACA Now?

by Sarah K. Weinberg, MD, Editor

Trying to assess the current status of health care policy in the other Washington reminds me of the line in “Peter and the Wolf” after the wolf has swallowed the duck, whole: “And now, this is how things stood...”

Republicans: The party is split in several ways. Some want to drop the whole idea of repealing the ACA because they can’t agree on a replacement. Some want an even more draconian replacement that will lower taxes on the wealthy even more. Some think that the ACA will crumble on its own, bringing another opportunity for a less-regulated market-based system.

Democrats: Initial euphoria over the demise of the American Health Care Act (AHCA) bill is giving way to the reality that the ACA has problems that need fixing. Progressive Democrats, including Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders, are calling for a push for Medicare for All. Now.

Insurers: These companies are mostly focused on getting the Trump administration to keep the cost-sharing reduction payments to insurers to keep their plans affordable for low-income people. They’re also worried about the loss of younger, healthier enrollees if the ACA individual mandate is not enforced.

Trump administration: Mixed signals are coming from the President and others. He wants to move on to tax reform, but he is also blaming the extreme conservatives for the failure of the AHCA. On the one hand, the administration expects the ACA to collapse, causing the Democrats to come crawling to the Republicans. On the other hand, if the administration helps that collapse by failing to “take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed” (for example, by failing to enforce the individual mandate), that risks violating the Constitution

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advocates for high
quality, sustainable,
affordable, publicly
funded health care
coverage for ALL***



**Health Care is a
Human Right**

Health Care for All-WA Newsletter

Spring 2017

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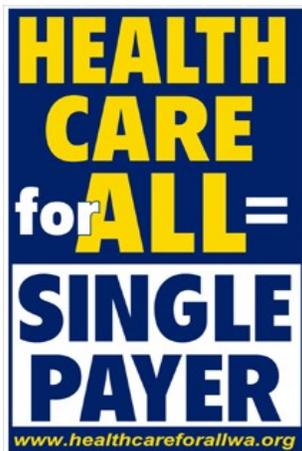
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From the President's Desk

by Martha Koester, President.

After Defeating Trumpcare—Now What?

The Affordable Care Act is far from ideal, mainly because it leaves insurance companies in charge, though prevented from engaging in some of their worst practices like refusing to insure people who have pre-existing conditions. Still, though millions remain uninsured, it has helped a lot of people. Successfully defending it from the AHCA attack is definitely a victory of sorts. And there is no better time to continue to push for single payer than when health care remains in the forefront of public discussion.

Health care is very likely to remain in the public eye, because congressional Republicans are not finished attempting to dismantle any public involvement in providing it.

Representative Paul Ryan continues to advocate replacing Medicare with “premium support.” This means that seniors and disabled people would be given a tax credit to put toward buying private insurance. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this would double health care costs for currently covered populations. The Republicans would also like to make Medicaid funds available as a block grant that will essentially end the program, as states could spend the money on anything.

Nationally, Rep. John Conyers has reintroduced the single payer bill HR 676. The only Washington representative to cosponsor so far is WA-07’s Pramila Jayapal—please contact other representatives and ask them to sign on. Yes—Republicans, too. All representatives need to hear from their constituents on this. Senator Sanders has promised to introduce single payer legislation in the Senate—do contact him to insist that this must be real single payer, not just a public option.

Senator Bernie Sanders
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-5141
<https://www.sanders.senate.gov/contact/comment>

In Washington State, the Washington Health Security Trust (WHST) HB 1026/SB 5701 has been introduced for the 2017-2018 session, but failed to get a hearing or to move out of committee. It is too late to get more cosponsors, but it would still be a good idea to ask your representatives to commit to supporting these bills next year.

Legislators are understandably gun-shy. By passing single payer, they would paint big targets on their backs, drawing hundreds of thousands of campaign dollars to throw them out of office. Why would anyone want to pass legislation which results in getting thrown out of office and having the legislation repealed? What we have to do here is to convince them that we are capable of defending them. ###

Outreach Committee Report

by Marcia Steadman, Outreach Chair.

Spring 2017 Update on Outreach Events

Speaking Events

Speakers from Health Care for All-Washington were very busy this past winter, as we reached out across the state and talked to these groups: the 44th Legislative District Democrats in Snohomish, the 29th Leg. Dist. Democrats in south Puget Sound, the Jefferson Co. Democrats in Port Townsend, the Orcas Island Indivisible group, the Rotary Club members in Poulsbo, and the Kirkland Meaningful Movies, after their screening of “Now is the Time.”

Winter Tabling Events

Health Care for All-Washington staffed information tables at some of the Social Security forums held by the Puget Sound Association of Retired Americans (PSARA) and at the PNHPWW showing of the new film “Now is the Time: Healthcare for Everybody.” We value highly our relationships with these and other similar organizations that share our goal of universal, single-payer health care for all.

Summer Tabling Events

We have a new banner! And we are eager to unfurl it at a location near you! It’s time to start applying for tabling space at farmers’ markets and community celebrations. Our goal is to reach out to two “new” legislative districts where we have not previously tabled. We are especially looking for supporters in southwest and central Washington locations. Please contact outreach@healthcareforallwa.org with details if you know of a likely location near you.

2017 New and Renewing Members

First quarter 2017

New

Al Bergstein
Bonnie & Jerry Bucher
Bevin McLeod
Bonny Oborn

Renewing

Kim Abbey
Toni Ameslav
Karl Anderberg
Ernest Anderson
Cyrus Appell
Alfred & Harriet Arkley
Seth Armstrong
Jim Arnold
Kristin Barber
Donna Joy & Dennis
Neuzil
Charlton Price
Nancy Robinson
Alanna Ruddell

Elaine & Sidney Smith
Jennifer Taylor
Joanne Temcov
John Van Buskirk
Pat Vernie
Peter Byers
Edward & Gail Crouch
Diane DeWitt
Betty Eberharter
Nancy Ellingham
Jayn Foy
Marian Glover
Elinor Graham
Elaine Hickman
Lucy Hitchcock
Sara Johnson
Paul Knopf
Dolly & Don Lister
Larry Lowther
Martha McLaren
Patricia Melgard

House Parties

Do your friends ask you about single-payer health care? Would you like some help explaining it to them? Schedule a house party with an informative video, followed by discussion and sharing of stories. Just contact outreach@healthcareforallwa.org.

Have you noticed the multitude of new organizations with a single-payer focus that are forming lately? This is further proof that universal, single-payer health care is gaining in popularity. As the year unfolds, we plan to look for synergies, develop relationships, and partner with other organizations that share our goal of universal, single-payer health care for all. Together, we can do so much more.

“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.” – attributed to former Pres. Harry S Truman, among others.

Legislative Action Committee

by *Ronnie Shure, Legislative Chair.*

Now is the time for single payer!

The recent failure of the American Health Care Act in Congress is an opening. There are still threats to undermine the ACA using executive orders and changes in federal rules. However, the public outcry over attempts to cut coverage has been eye-opening. Now is the time to educate the public about the ultimate answer for our current healthcare problems! Now is the time to talk to lawmakers and citizens about single-payer health care!

There are single-payer bills being proposed in the US Senate and House of Representatives. “Medicare for All” will soon be introduced by Bernie Sanders in the Senate. The “Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act” (HR 676) is gaining supporters in the House. Our US legislators will be available in their home districts when Congress will recess April 10-21, around Memorial Day, around Independence Day, and then again for the month of August.

- Now is the time to urge our Republican legislators to come up with a plan for something better instead of just cutting health care. If you live in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 8th Congressional Districts, please watch for local actions even if your legislators do not hold public meetings.
- Now is the time to urge our Democratic legislators to move forward on single-payer to include coverage for everybody. Please attend public meetings and ask what your legislator is doing to promote single-payer.
- Now is the time for Republicans and Democrats to work together.

The legislators in states such as Oregon and California are discussing actions to move single-payer forward, and they are being joined in many parts of the country. Our single-payer bills in

Washington state (HB 1026 & SB 5701) have been supported by incumbents and new members in both the Senate and the House, so we are moving forward along with other states. Our Governor, our Health Care Authority, and our

Insurance Commissioner in Washington state are educating our citizens about the real value from improvements in health care that were stimulated by the Affordable Care Act. Now is the time to build momentum to move forward to single-payer.

- Now is the time to meet with legislators on healthcare committees to plan for the 2018 session. If you live in the 5th, 27th, 29th, 34th, 41st, 48th, or 49th Washington Legislative Districts, please watch for announcements of meetings or organize your own meeting with your local representative to urge them to act on single-payer bills. Please contact action@healthcareforallWA.org to find out about meetings in your LD.



HCFA contingent at the Our Revolution health care march in Olympia, February 25th.

HCFA-WA Welcomes Bevin McLeod



Bevin McLeod has joined HCFA-WA this winter as our part-time Program Director. Bevin holds degrees both in Economics and International Studies with an emphasis on International Political Economy from the University of Washington. She currently sits as Chair of the Advocacy and Outreach Committee for GenR – a support group of the International Rescue Committee. She also is an elected member of the Executive Board for the 36th Legislative District Democrats as the female Representative to King County. She comes to us from a diverse

campaigning as Rep. Shelley Kloba’s campaign manager. She is passionate about equity, equality, and human rights issues, and has focused her work on facilitating positive change at the local level.

Bevin writes:

“I am excited to step into the role of Program Director at Healthcare for All-WA, and to be working alongside such hardworking and passionate individuals. I know there is much hard work to do, but I strongly believe that through concerted effort we will achieve our goals at the State level.

“Harnessing the momentum of healthcare reform is at the forefront of my thought process as we navigate through uncertain times at the national level. It is imperative that we bolster our efforts at the community outreach level as well as others, and so through collaboration we are working on building support and lasting relationships in several areas including: the private sector (small businesses), the legislative sector, and at the grassroots level. As we continue our development and outreach work, I very much look forward to hearing from each of our members, and to hearing ideas and plans on direct action within our districts statewide.

“Stay tuned for updates, and in the meantime, know that your efforts matter and that I am grateful for everyone’s hard work!”

We welcome Bevin to our cause with enthusiasm!

Health Care Is a Human Right – Washington Campaign

The next meeting of this coalition will be on Tuesday, May 2 at 4:00-6:00 pm at the Washington State Labor Council office at 16th Ave. S. and S. Jackson St. Both HCFA-WA and PNHPWW are member organizations of this coalition. The prospect of rolling back the gains of the ACA, along with cutting Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, has given new life and purpose to this group. The meeting on Jan. 4 was attended by about 70 people from at least 20 different organizations. Do you belong to a progressive group that might want to join this campaign? If so, encourage your group to contact www.healthcareisarithwa.org.

What next?

Continued from p 1

and the President’s solemn oath to uphold it. That could be a potential route to impeachment. Even without going that far, actively working to sabotage the ACA would damage the public trust needed for any future bipartisan legislation.

Public opinion: The fight over the AHCA galvanized public opinion about not taking away health coverage from those who have it, especially those who have it thanks to the ACA. Recognition that, in reality, everyone should have health coverage is increasing support, and the visibility of support, for some sort of single-payer plan that would cover everyone living in America.

Even very conservative OpEd columnist Charles Krauthammer recently wrote: “A broad national consensus is developing that health care is indeed a right. This is historically new.” He also speculates that President Trump might switch sides, and pull “... the greatest 180 since Disraeli dished the Whigs in 1867...and joins the single payer side.”

In Krauthammer’s words: “Talk about disruption? About kicking over the furniture? That would be an American Krakatoa.”

###



HCFA-WA Presence at Healthcare NOW! Conference

(left to right) Sherry Weinberg, Marcia Stedman, Chuck Richards & Kim Abbey marched to the Wall St. Raging Bull sculpture on Sunday, January 15, 2017. The conference in New York City attracted over 500 attendees from all over the U.S. to develop strategies to attain Medicare for All.

Letter from Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (WA-07)

Dear Martha,

Thank you for contacting me to express your concerns about the repeal of the Affordable Care Act and its Republican replacement, the American Health Care Act. I appreciate you taking the time to contact me about this urgent issue.

I am honored to represent you and our district, which is home to incredible diversity, innovation, and progress. I am committed to fighting for a just economy that works for everyone, fairness and equality, health and safety, and livable communities that will serve as a model for the rest of the nation.

Participation is key to the democratic process, so I very much appreciate your continued engagement with me and other elected officials who represent you.

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the uninsured rate fell 37 percent since the beginning of 2014, and in the first quarter of 2016, to a historic low of 8.6 percent. 20 million more Americans gained coverage under the ACA, and Americans who were denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions were guaranteed healthcare as well. The ACA also expanded Medicaid, and today, 16 million more lower-income adults have gained health coverage. In our state of Washington, 605,000 Washingtonians gained health coverage since the passage of the ACA, and the uninsured rate fell by more than half, down from 14.2 percent in 2010 to 6.6 percent in 2015. The ACA also allowed for 55,000 jobs to be created across Washington state.

I know that there are still issues that we must address to fully expand health care coverage to all Americans, from reducing premiums and deductibles and reducing costs of pharmaceutical drugs. I have been a long-time

supporter of single-payer healthcare because I believe this is actually the means through which we would guarantee affordable coverage for all Americans.

However, it is absolutely undeniable that thousands of families across our country and in Washington have obtained quality healthcare through the ACA. It is also undeniable that Republicans are not interested in working with us to make healthcare more affordable. Rather, they are focused on destroying the Affordable Care Act and taking away any gains that millions of people have made because of the ACA. According to the most recent cost estimates of the Republican plan released by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the American Health Care Act (AHCA) would strip coverage from 24 million more Americans and could result in 52 million uninsured by 2026. It would slash federal Medicaid funding by \$880 billion and would remove health insurance from the 600,000 Washingtonians who gained coverage through Medicaid expansion under the ACA.

Given that this plan simply requires Americans to pay more for less, it cannot be classified as a replacement healthcare plan. Rather, I believe it is actually a tax plan that will enable one of the largest transfers of wealth from working families to the very richest in our country. The “Trumpcare” plan would give \$600 billion in tax subsidies to the wealthiest in our country on the backs of working families. The top 4% of income earners in the country would get \$200,000 annually in tax breaks, while the average older American would pay up to \$15,000 more for their healthcare.

Health care is a fundamental right, not a privilege. That’s why I support a shift to a

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Comparisons between U.S. & Single Payer Nations

By Sarah K. Weinberg, MD, Editor

Small items bubble up in the news periodically that compare how U.S. residents fare in health care matters with residents of other nations that have national health systems.

Cystic fibrosis patients

When I was in training as a pediatrician, the oldest CF patients were around 21 years old. There have been tremendous advances in care for CF, and now many are living well into their 40s. However, over the past 17 years, survival of Canadian CF patients has increased even more, with the median survival age now over 50 – 10 years longer than the U.S. average.

Living with CF requires careful and continuous contact with health providers, meticulous self-management, and taking expensive medications. Being uninsured, or underinsured, raises huge barriers for adults with CF in the U.S., but there is no such thing as uninsurance in Canada. Even within the U.S., CF patients covered by Medicaid have significantly better health outcomes than the uninsured, despite their poverty and social vulnerability.

Poorly coordinated care

A recent survey (2013 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey) of health care experiences in 11 wealthy nations focused on how well primary care coordination of care was functioning. Quality coordination of care through a relationship with a primary care provider has been shown to be critical to efficient, effective, and safe health care for patients. Overall, about 5% of adults experienced poor coordination of care, but in the U.S. the number was about 9.8% - the highest of the 11 nations. Interestingly, poorly coordinated care in the U.S. was not especially related to insurance status, but more to the lack of readily available primary care providers.

Representative Jayapal *Continued from p 7*

single-payer system of health insurance. I have also supported legislation that would protect Americans from losing their health coverage due to the repeal and replace of the ACA. I co-sponsored H.R.676, the Expanded & Improved Medicare for All Act, which would provide all residents of United States and U.S. territories with free health care that includes all medically necessary care. I also co-sponsored bills that aim to protect women's health. Moreover, as the Vice Ranking Member of the House of Representatives Committee on the Budget, I will resist every Republican attempt to reduce health coverage through the budget reconciliation process and fight to ensure that we work towards quality healthcare for all.

Again, thank you for getting in touch with me about this urgent issue. Please continue to contact me on issues that you care about, and stay

informed of all the issues that are coming before us. Sign up for my e-mail newsletter at jayapal.house.gov/contact/newsletter so you can receive updates from D.C. and Seattle.

It is an honor to represent you in the U.S. House of Representatives. If you have further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us at 202-225-3106.

Sincerely,
Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

If you are in District 7, Please write to Representative Jayapal and thank her for cosponsoring HR 676. 319 Cannon House Office

Join Now for 2017!
Health Care for All – Washington

Yes, I'll join to work for high quality, sustainable, affordable, publicly-funded health care for ALL Washington residents

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\$ _____ Contributions to **Health Care For All-WA**, a 501(c)4, go for vital organizational growth, but are **not** tax deductible.

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Info@healthcareforallwa.org ; www.healthcareforallwa.org

Report from HCFA-Spokane

Meeting on March 25, the first item on the agenda for HCFASpokane was a champagne toast to the demise of the American Health Care Act. Cheers!

With 11 members present, some of whom were newcomers, they briefly reviewed the history of the group. It all started six years ago with a book club's reading and discussion of T.R. Reid's "The Healing of America". Mr. Reid accepted the club's invitation to speak in Spokane. With sponsorship, the result was a standing-room-only crowd at the Convention Center to listen to Mr. Reid. Since then the group has organized several educational events, including a showing of "The Healthcare Movie" with the producers present, and a return visit by Mr. Reid for a panel discussion.

One member, Lynnette Vehrs, ran a very close race for State Representative in 2016. Her strong voice for universal health coverage reached a large group of supporters. A small group recently met with Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers to express their opposition to the AHCA.

Dr. Dan Schaffer and Lynnette continue to speak about single payer and health care issues to business and political groups – Lynnette will speak next at the South Hill Rotary Club on April 7. Dan has prepared a presentation for business employers and has set up a Facebook page for Health Care for All – Spokane.

The group is also looking into other progressive groups (local, state and national) that have sprung up this winter that also support single payer/universal health care. Research into past initiatives is also being done.

Health Care for All-Washington

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George Lakey
Activist, Author
Waging NonViolence


Carol Paris, MD
President, PNHP

QR Code

Presentation of PNHPWW 2017 John Geyman Health Justice Advocate Award
Presented by John Geyman, MD

Saturday, April 29th, 7:00pm
Doors open at 6:00pm

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Easy parking under Kane Hall, enter via 15th Ave NE
For more information, Email - pnhp.westernwashington@comcast.net
www.pnhpwesternwashington.org

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