

SUMMARY - WMM4A MONTHLY MEETING – DEC. 12, 2018

PLEASE NOTE: The next monthly of WMM4A will be Wed. Jan. 9, 2019. We will be discussing and deciding on a **proposal for WMM4A to join the statewide Mass-Care coalition**. In recent months, several Western Mass. organizers have joined the board of Mass-Care to strengthen its focus on long-term strategy and building the grassroots movement for Single Payer in Mass. Western Mass. is currently the most active region in the state and we will be sharing our experience at the state level. New folks, as always, are welcome to attend the Jan 9th meeting. Anyone who has attended at least one previous monthly meeting of WMM4A will be eligible to participate in decision-making.

Local Updates:

The South Hadley/Granby (SH/G) hub will be working on a town resolution in South Hadley in support of Single Payer. They are also planning a Fix It showing at Gaylord Library.

The Easthampton hub is also planning to work on a Single Payer resolution through their City Council.

A delegation from the SH/G and Easthampton hubs will be meeting with their rep-elect Dan Carey soon.

The Amherst hub is planning to connect with members of its new Town Council about a Single Payer resolution. Amherst voted earlier this year to replace its Town Meeting with a Council form of government.

A group of Springfield organizers will form a Springfield hub that will initially coordinate Single Payer activity in several districts. A delegation will be meeting with Rep. Tosado soon. Their next hub meeting is planned for the first week in January.

The Health Care Providers group is planning an evening wine-and-cheese outreach event on Jan. 30th.

The Northampton hub will be meeting soon with their rep-elect Lindsay Sabadosa.

Conversation with Rep. Solomon Goldstein-Rose:

Goldstein-Rose (G-R), who chose not to run for re-election in Nov., will be ending his term in a few weeks. He agreed to meet with us to discuss his views about how things work on Beacon Hill. Here are some notes from the Q&A with him.

- In his experience, few people or groups contacted him repeatedly about a topic or a bill. His opinion is that repeat advocacy is important – but don't harass your rep.

- G-R says it isn't easy to get your issue, especially a controversial one, on the House agenda. His view is that this depends on the Leadership, in particular the Speaker of the House, perceiving that there is a "consensus" -- such as among legislators, businesses, and the press. (He didn't mention the public, according to my notes.)
- G-R mentioned that AIM (Associated Industries of Mass.) and the Retailers Association of Mass. are particularly influential with the current Speaker (Robert DeLeo).
- G-R's view is that many legislators consider Single Payer to be "unrealistic" at this time; that they laugh about the ability of the legislature to pass SP legislation; that they can't wrap their minds around the complexity of health care financing.
- The last big Mass. healthcare bill, passed in 2006, established so-called "Romneycare." According to G-R, this is considered "recent" in legislative time, and legislators who fought for that don't want to change it now. He mentioned Ronald Mariano, a key player in the 2006 reform, who is also among House leadership now (Majority leader).
- G-R says he was personally never approached by health insurance lobbyists and is unaware of their influence overall in the statehouse

NEXT MEETING: WED. JANUARY 9, 2019 – 6:30 P.M.