

Healthcare-Now! 2009 National Strategy Conference

Coalition Building Workshop Notes

Facilitated by Ali Thebert (PNHP), Mikuak Rai (CUUSP)

This workshop was attended by approximately 30 people. The discussion began with Ali and Mikuak briefly explaining some of their experience as it relates to PNHP doctors and other activist groups coordinating together to present single-payer information to the public. From there, the discussion evolved to include input from a number of the workshop participants. Dr. Margaret Flowers (PNHP) helped with coordinating the 'stack' of people whom were to speak. Below are notes that serve to relay what was shared amongst the group, as it relates to building coalition.

The following persons contributed to the discussion with their own comments, insights and inquiries:

Ken – Texas

Tom – Chicago

Harriet – Kentucky

Stan – Nashville

Yonathan – New York

Josh – New York

Ben – Kansas City

Sarah – Oakland

David – New York

Margie – Atlanta

Three (3) types of coalitions:

- I. Single Payer-specific advocates
- II. Health Care Justice
 - a. Hospital closings
 - b. Reference to the importance of attending of groups' meetings
- III. "Other issue" groups
 - a. Poverty elimination
 - b. Women's issues
 - c. Environment
 - d. Labor/Jobs
 - e. Education
 - f. Health care
 - g. Peace/Anti-war
 - h. Immigration
 - i. Prisons
 - j. Veterans
 - k. Housing
 - l. Gentrification
 - m. Youth
 - n. Disabilities
 - o. People of Color/Racial disparities
 - p. Elderly

These following ideas (listed in no particular order) were comments shared by attendees:

- Bring criminal misconduct of elected representatives into the light.
- One action leads to another.
- Use journalistic and propaganda tools – You must understand the tactics and language of the opponents (conservatives, corporations).

- One person mentioned being in insurance sales, and serving as an ‘insurance agent’ for single-payer...sharing with his customers what better financial outcomes would result for them by supporting single-payer.
- “Health Care Apartheid” – a term from Chicago organizers regarding hospitals refusing care and sending patients to other places where they would receive inferior care.
- Step into opportunities (to promote and organize) – disputes, hospital closings.
- There was mention of R.A.M. (Remote Area Medical).
- Engage campus coordinators (with HCN and PNHP). Hip Hop Congress was mentioned as having mobilization efforts on campuses nationwide.
- Speak to youth (high school); encourage critical thinking and media literacy.
- Start with Congress 112 immediately. Demand no campaign contributions from private health insurance industry.
- Find persons to run under new political affiliations, i.e. Single-Payer Party, Human Rights Party.
- Create our own media – harness capacity of social networking technology.
- “Connect the dots” – how single-payer connects to banking bailouts, media reform, etc.
- To build a strong coalition, give concrete ways and methods for how various groups can get involved.
- Language must be inclusive and non-judgmental; People are generally bi-conceptual.
- The “message” must be cohesive – “Health Care Is A Human Right”, “Everybody In, Nobody Out.”
- First impressions are lasting (as it relates to messaging).
- Coalition building is work!
- Be Creative!
- The national single-payer effort needs a broad, inclusive message that emphasizes the need.
- Identify “common ground” issues with which to connect; US Social Forum as a great place to build momentum and mobilization for single-payer.
- We are engaged in a “new social movement.”