

Labor Campaign for Single-Payer

Healthcare Is A Right -- Not A Privilege

January 2013 National Strategy Conference Outcomes

Participants at the Labor Campaign for Single Payer's National Strategy Conference vowed to move beyond "revolutionary politics" to real political mobilization. The conference assessed the strategic landscape in the post-Obamacare, post-election period and looked at the opportunities and threats faced by the movement to win a single-payer Medicare for All solution to the ongoing healthcare crisis. Attendees confirmed support for four core principles:

1. Our fight is linked to the fight to defend and expand the social insurance model. We support all efforts that draw the line at no concessions to the crown jewel programs of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Single-payer is part of the high road solution to the fiscal and economic crisis.
2. We win when we build a social movement that builds a labor-community alliance.
3. Labor must do more to support and resource the fight for healthcare for all.
4. We support all efforts that help build a labor-led movement towards single-payer including federal and state campaigns, human rights organizing models and contract fights to defend hard won benefits.

Organizing Opportunities

In the immediate future, organizing opportunities will include:

- Building opposition to any "grand bargain" solution to the debt/sequestration crisis.
- Organizing support for the full Medicaid expansion allowable under the ACA.
- Participating in the AFL-CIO National Convention in September 2013.
- Responding to the rollout of the state exchanges beginning in October 2013.
- Connecting with ongoing contract bargaining fights where healthcare is an issue.
- Educating unions about the impact of the 2018 "Cadillac tax" on employer provided benefits.
- Building labor support for state-level Healthcare Is a Human Right campaigns.
- Building support in the single-payer and labor communities for the Robin Hood Campaign for a financial transactions tax to fund healthcare and other social insurance programs.
- Reaching out to unions that participate in Multi-Employer Plans that are in crisis due to the increased pressures under the ACA.
- Focus a harsh light on the insurance industry.
- Educating labor about the importance of palliative care provisions in any comprehensive healthcare system.

Activities

Some activities that can sustain these opportunities are:

- Convening state level meetings.
- Systematic outreach to Central Labor Councils and State federations.
- Supporting the establishment of local union committees.
- Training union activists to present a focused power point talk at union events.
- Recruiting International Unions to support and resource our work.
- Increasing fundraising to sustain an expanded campaign.
- Promoting national and regional demonstrations that are well resourced and have significant labor support.
- Assess the possibility of submitting a widely endorsed resolution for consideration at the AFL-CIO Convention.
- Support divestment campaigns and other tactics directed at the insurance industry.
- Participate in meetings and conferences that bring together union participants in multi-employer plans.
- Encourage unions to demand that employers sign letters of support for single-payer Medicare for All healthcare reform.
- Identify and reach out to potential allies in the movements to defend and expand the social insurance model.
- Establish metrics and benchmarks to assess the progress of the Campaign.

More Work Needed

We need to work to clarify the following issues of concern to our Campaign and its allies:

- The relative advantages, disadvantages and pitfalls of pursuing state-by-state campaigns vs. an exclusive focus on a single piece of federal legislation.
- Clarity on the differences between for profit and so-called non-profit healthcare providers and how to treat them in proposals for reform.
- An analysis of the details around the implementation of the ACA and their impact on collective bargaining, our strategic allies and the organizing terrain.
- A systematic approach to build solidarity relationships with unions in other countries who are involved in fights to defend their national healthcare systems and against austerity.
- Work with our allies to develop a 5 to 10 year strategic plan to win single-payer Medicare for All.

Outreach Priorities

The Conference determined that, in addition to building our support at all levels of the labor movement, we must also increase our outreach efforts to worker centers, immigrant advocacy organizations and the disability community. The LCSP Steering Committee must better reflect the diversity of the working class by incorporating more leaders who are persons of color. We will urge our affiliates to reach out to young workers and to nominate them to serve on our boards and committees.