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## **Health Care Town Halls--What to do at disruptive townhall meetings**

Health care town hall meeting across the country are being attacked by a vocal minority uninterested in democratic debate. It is still important to attend these meetings as there will be many in the audience that are unfamiliar with single payer AND willing to listen and learn.

**Be empowered, not intimidated.** In townhalls across the country, a small segment of the population is attempting to disrupt meetings and close down debate. Most people support single payer national health insurance and this has the Tea Party members running scared. They wouldn't be there if they didn't realize that they are losing the battle, and they wouldn't be trying to shut down debate if they thought that intelligent debate would be on their side.

**Show up early.** Every town hall meeting is different, and you'll only be able to find out the structure by being able to speak with the organizers ahead of time. If they are asking people to sign up to ask questions or are "taking stack," sign up early. Before the meeting starts is a great time to speak with others about single payer before disruptions can start. Have your ID on hand as many townhalls are only allowing in constituents or people that can officially identify themselves.

**Come with a group.** Over 60% of the general population supports single payer and it's important to represent those numbers at the town halls. Bring fellow PNHPers, friends, and family so that they can show their support as well.

**Show your viewpoints visually.** Wearing professional clothes will give credibility to your statements, or, if possible, coordinate with the other members in your group to wear matching single payer t-shirts. If allowed, bring signs that show your support.

**Bring informational sheets to hand out.** There is plenty of information outlining the current legislation and single payer national health insurance on [www.pnhp.org](http://www.pnhp.org). For specific information on the Weiner Amendment see [www.pnhp.org/amendment](http://www.pnhp.org/amendment).

**Sign people up.** A clipboard for email addresses can do wonders in packed meeting halls. Make sure there are checkboxes or a spot for notes so you can differentiate between people that are already on board and would like to be more involved and those that aren't familiar with the issue and would like to learn more.

**Debrief.** Share what you know with local chapter members and the PNHP office. We are keeping close track of where our politicians stand on health care issues and will use any information you can provide us to further our targeting of legislators.

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