

Everybody In!

WWW.HEALTHCARE-NOW.ORG

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The Campaign for Guaranteed Healthcare Fights Back

While establishment Democrats rally to “defend the ACA”, the grassroots is powered by another call: Improved Medicare for All. Leading that call is the Campaign for Guaranteed Healthcare, a coalition effort organized by Healthcare-NOW and partners such as Labor Campaign for Single Payer, National Nurses United, Progressive Democrats of America, and many more. The Campaign’s focus is to resist GOP attempts to undermine and privatize healthcare access while going on the offensive for single payer healthcare.

Launched earlier this year, the Campaign has been coordinating nationwide resistance to the horrific agenda we are

watching develop from the halls of Congress. The Republican’s “repeal and replace Obamacare” bill – the AHCA – is basically a huge tax break for corporations and the wealthiest, and would translate into the loss of healthcare access for millions. While the bill’s impact on Medicaid and the subsidies has been well-covered, one lesser-known piece of the bill is the repeal of a tax that keeps Medicare financially sound, putting the program at serious risk.

Outrage over this death panel of a bill has generated momentum, and the Campaign is growing wider by the day. So far, the coalition has generated thousands of calls and emails to legislators, demanding to shut down proposed cuts to healthcare and expand improved Medicare to all residents, and has also helped facilitate and set up district visits and town hall crashes.



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An Interview with Alex Lawson of Social Security Works

Alex Lawson is the Executive Director of Social Security Works, the convening member of the Strengthen Social Security Coalition — a coalition made up of over 340 national and state organizations representing over 50 million Americans.

Healthcare-NOW: What is the mission and goal of Social Security Works?

Alex Lawson: Social Security Works fights to protect and expand Social Security and Medicare, and to lower prescription drug prices. Our mission is based on an understanding of the expansive vision behind Social Security. Social Security was always meant to be a cornerstone. A foundation of economic security that every generation would build upon.

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Largest Single-Payer Strategy Conference to Date Converges on NYC **SEE PAGE 2**





Largest Ever Single-Payer Strategy Conference Converges on NYC

By Benjamin Day, Healthcare-NOW

On the weekend of January 13, just prior to the inauguration of Donald Trump in Washington D.C., the largest ever Single-Payer Strategy Conference converged on New York City. Likely attacks on every public healthcare program in the country, and the prospect of millions losing access to healthcare, generated a sense of urgency for mobilizing and expanding the single-payer movement.

More than 500 activists from across the country attended, and dozens more were turned away as we exceeded capacity for the venue. Rallies at Trump Tower (photo, right) and Wall Street (photo, top right) book-ended the conference, and Nina Turner (with

raised fist, photo top left) kicked off the conference with an inspirational keynote speech capturing the crucial challenges but also opportunities of this political moment.

Workshops and plenaries throughout day two of the conference focused on the nitty gritty details of the organizing tasks in front of us - from strategic planning to online organizing and coalition building - while the final day brought together and integrated feedback from every participant to paint a picture of an action plan for our movement.

You can find full video, photos, slide shows, full text of presentations, and participant notes at the site for the Conference Wiki: <http://bit.ly/nycconference> **HCN!**



Guaranteed Healthcare... *from page 1*

Another promising outcome of the campaign is the renewed enthusiasm for the single payer bill in the house, H.R. 676. Activists have been capitalizing on the energy around healthcare, demanding that their representatives take the lead on the single payer alternative by cosponsoring the legislation. Grassroots pressure has resulted in 10 new cosponsors over the past couple of weeks, bringing the total number of signing legislators to 71 at the time of this writing.

The Campaign's next big thing is the National Day of Action for Improved Medicare for All on April 8th. Local organizers and groups are planning rallies or speak outs at medical institutions to draw attention to the local impacts that the GOP's American Health Care Act will have, and to call for single-payer as the only moral and sustainable "replacement" plan.

April 8th will come at a crucial moment as it's also the first day of a two-week "April recess" when Members of Congress return to their districts and will

have to face constituents at town halls, on conference calls, office visits, etc. and should provide a great hook for the press. We intend to keep the pressure up throughout that recess.

Did you miss any of these actions? The online actions on the Campaign's page are still open, and by signing up you can be alerted to future pushback efforts. **Join the Campaign by signing up at: <http://bit.ly/cfghc> **HCN!****

Alex Lawson... from page 1

Frances Perkins, FDR, Eleanor Roosevelt and others understood that the goal is a system of economic security for all Americans from birth until death.

A national health system was always a core part of the vision, and I think Perkins would be disappointed that in 82 years we have only partially achieved it, for people 65 and older or people with disabilities. And that is why expanding Medicare to cover every person in America is a core part of our goal at Social Security Works.



Alex Lawson, Executive Director of Social Security Works

HCN: Tell us about the attacks on Social Security that started in 2010, and the strategy Social Security Works launched to resist them.

AL: In 2010, there was a completely ridiculous and unfortunate turn towards austerity policy led by President Obama. In the middle of the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression, a downturn caused entirely by the greedy liars on Wall Street, Washington, DC got caught up in an austerity fever. President Obama empaneled the Bowles-Simpson commission and they came up with their B-S plan to destroy Social Security and Medicare.

Although they occurred in 2010, these attacks were part of a campaign that

has been waged by the same people for over 82 years. A greed driven campaign against systems like Social Security that show the private sector can never provide the same security that we can achieve as a society that works together. Social Security, which spends less than one penny of every dollar in premiums paid in to administer the whole program, shows the efficiency and effectiveness of universal social insurance programs.

Our strategy grows directly from our understanding this as one continuous struggle between the greedy liars on Wall Street and the people, between a vision of prosperity created by and shared widely by the people and a vision of a handful who have everything and the many who have nothing.

We take every attack against Social Security as an opportunity to highlight that Social Security works, that not only should it never be cut, it must be expanded.

We changed the entire conversation to highlight Social Security as a solution not a problem, and to correctly identify the problem as a retirement security crisis. Over time, as we continued to defeat the direct attacks on Social Security, the conversation changed from how much benefits would be cut to how much benefits would be expanded.

HCN: What lessons can the growing movement for single-payer healthcare draw from the history of struggle over social security?

AL: The lesson to be learned is that this is one struggle, and so we must fight together in the exact same way. Medicare works — it is a solution. A lack of health care is the problem. We need to use every attack against our health care as an opportunity to highlight how well Medicare works and how there is only one direction to go on Medicare, to expand it to cover more and more people, until every single person is covered. **HCN!**

Single-Payer School... from page 4

Nathan Wilkes (Englewood, CO):

“You should get a divorce,” our son’s social worker told us during a meeting in late 2007. My wife and I exchanged worried glances, hoping for a punch-line that would not come. The social worker was serious.



We were meeting with her to discuss how to maintain health coverage for our 4-year-old son, who was about to cap out of his second insurance plan in less than two years. At the time, there were very few protections or options for insurance for people with chronic illnesses, and our son had one of the most expensive — hemophilia.”

Debbie Silverstein (Kent, OH):

“Shortly after I retired from teaching in 2005, my brother was arrested again and jailed for DUI and driving on a suspended license.



My brother had long suffered from numerous addiction problems as well as mental health problems, but even though he had worked most of his adult life, he had never received treatment due to lack of health insurance.” **HCN!**

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SECURITY, DON'T CUT IT!

www.socialsecurityworks.org

Healthcare-NOW Launches Single Payer School

By Benjamin Day and Stephanie Nakajima

In January 2017 Healthcare-NOW formally launched the "Single Payer School" - an online educational platform for patients and providers to learn the skills and knowledge they need to become effective activists and spokespeople.

We kicked off the School with an intensive, three month leadership development program for 10 existing and new community organizers, who through the end of April will complete trainings on

Telling Your Healthcare Story, Healthcare Policy 101, and Social Movement Organizing.

Later this year we'll begin offering online trainings that will be open to the public, and we'll also start recruiting our second round of leadership development enrollees.

Here, we share clips from several of our leaders' healthcare stories about why they have felt the need to fight for universal healthcare. You can read their stories in full at www.healthcare-now.org under our "Stories" menu item:

Amy Vilela (Las Vegas, NV): 'In June of 2015, my daughter Shalynne fell and went to the ER in excruciating pain with a red, swollen leg. The staff immediately asked if she had insurance. Shalynne replied "No."

They told her "Go get insurance and see a specialist, we are not a doctor's office"...

On June 25th Shalynne took a flight back to Kansas City. The blood clot broke off in her leg and caused a massive pulmonary embolism.

The next morning her father called and said Shalynne had woken up with severe chest pain. She coded in the ambulance.'



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Take Action for HR676!

Representative Conyers' bill would create single-payer system, "expanded and improved Medicare for all."

Rep. John Conyers is the lead sponsor of HR676, the Expanded & Improved Medicare For All Act, which currently has 62 co-sponsors. HR676 is the flagship legislation for the single-payer movement, which would establish healthcare as a right for all residents and save billions for families and employers. If you don't see your Representative listed as a co-sponsor below, make sure to call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to your Representative and ask them to co-sponsor HR676!

Rep. Adams, Alma S. [D-NC-12]
Rep. Bass, Karen [D-CA-37]
Rep. Beatty, Joyce [D-OH-3]
Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [D-OR-3]
Rep. Brady, Robert A. [D-PA-1]
Rep. Butterfield, G. K. [D-NC-1]
Rep. Capuano, Michael E. [D-MA-7]
Rep. Cartwright, Matt [D-PA-17]
Rep. Chu, Judy [D-CA-27]
Rep. Clark, Katherine M. [D-MA-5]
Rep. Clarke, Yvette D. [D-NY-9]
Rep. Clay, Wm. Lacy [D-MO-1]
Rep. Cleaver, Emanuel [D-MO-5]
Rep. Clyburn, James E. [D-SC-6]
Rep. Cohen, Steve [D-TN-9]
Rep. Cummings, Elijah E. [D-MD-7]
Rep. Davis, Danny K. [D-IL-7]
Rep. DeSaulnier, Mark [D-CA-11]
Rep. Doyle, Michael F. [D-PA-14]
Rep. Ellison, Keith [D-MN-5]
Rep. Engel, Eliot L. [D-NY-16]
Rep. Evans, Dwight [D-PA-2]
Rep. Fudge, Marcia L. [D-OH-11]
Rep. Garamendi, John [D-CA-3]

Rep. Green, Al [D-TX-9]
Rep. Grijalva, Raul M. [D-AZ-3]
Rep. Gutierrez, Luis V. [D-IL-4]
Rep. Hastings, Alcee L. [D-FL-20]
Rep. Huffman, Jared [D-CA-2]
Rep. Jackson Lee, Sheila [D-TX-18]
Rep. Jayapal, Pramila [D-WA-7]
Rep. Jeffries, Hakeem S. [D-NY-8]
Rep. Johnson, Henry C. "Hank," Jr. [D-GA-4]
Rep. Kaptur, Marcy [D-OH-9]
Rep. Kelly, Robin L. [D-IL-2]
Rep. Khanna, Ro [D-CA-17]
Rep. Lawrence, Brenda L. [D-MI-14]
Rep. Lee, Barbara [D-CA-13]
Rep. Lewis, John [D-GA-5]
Rep. Lieu, Ted [D-CA-33]
Rep. Lofgren, Zoe [D-CA-19]
Rep. Lowenthal, Alan S. [D-CA-47]
Rep. McGovern, James P. [D-MA-2]
Rep. Moore, Gwen [D-WI-4]
Rep. Nadler, Jerrold [D-NY-10]
Rep. Napolitano, Grace F. [D-CA-32]

Rep. Nolan, Richard M. [D-MN-8]
Rep. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large]
Rep. Pingree, Chellie [D-ME-1]
Rep. Pocan, Mark [D-WI-2]
Rep. Raskin, Jamie [D-MD-8]
Rep. Roybal-Allard, Lucille [D-CA-40]
Rep. Rush, Bobby L. [D-IL-1]
Rep. Ryan, Tim [D-OH-13]
Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9]
Rep. Scott, Robert C. "Bobby" [D-VA-3]
Rep. Serrano, Jose E. [D-NY-15]
Rep. Slaughter, Louise McIntosh [D-NY-25]
Rep. Speier, Jackie [D-CA-14]
Rep. Takano, Mark [D-CA-41]
Rep. Thompson, Bennie G. [D-MS-2]
Rep. Tonko, Paul [D-NY-20]* 01/24/2017
Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12]
Rep. Welch, Peter [D-VT-At Large]
Rep. Yarmuth, John A. [D-KY-3]