Record-Breaking Launch of the Medicare for All Act

By Benjamin Day, Healthcare-NOW

One year to the date that COVID-19 was confirmed in all 50 states, Representatives Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell introduced the Medicare for All Act of 2021 (H.R. 1976) with a record-breaking 112 original co-sponsors - more than half of Democrats in the House. When I was first hired at Healthcare-NOW in 2013, H.R. 676 was led with 37 original co-sponsors, and ended the session two years later with 63!

This list of co-sponsors includes 14 Committee Chairs, including for the first time ever Representative Frank Pallone - chair of the Energy & Commerce Committee, which has primary responsibility for healthcare legislation. The only Committee of Jurisdiction for the bill not chaired by a M4A supporter is Ways & Means.

This level of support was by no means a given after Joe Biden won the Democratic primary and the Presidency, running explicitly in opposition to M4A. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the defense of employer-sponsored healthcare increasingly indefensible.

The all-virtual press conference announcing the bill included some momentous testimony... continued page 2
Healthcare-NOW’s Board has approved an exciting new Strategic Plan for 2021-22. Our vision is that Healthcare-NOW will gradually shift from having a small staff team administer all of our program work, towards having staff supervise national volunteer teams to carry out and expand our most effective programs.

Since our founding, Healthcare-NOW has had an outsized impact on the Medicare for All movement for a small non-profit with only two staff. But a staff-driven approach will never allow us to develop the capacity, size, and grassroots power we’ll need to play a major role in passing Medicare for All through Congress.

Would you like to join a volunteer team helping us realize this vision? Email us at info@healthcare-now.org with your skill sets! HCN!

M4A Act… from page 1

from constituencies rarely at the forefront of our movement, but whose support is crucial:

For the first time ever, a hospital CEO publicly endorsed the Medicare for All legislation and spoke on its behalf: Dr. Eric Dickson, CEO of UMass Memorial hospital system, argued that M4A is crucial for hospitals to serve their patients, to achieve health equity, and to redirect the tremendous resources hospitals waste fighting health insurance plans. “There are thousands of people who do nothing but create administrative burden for providers through pre-authorization processes, denial of claims that then force the providers to go back and re-document and re-submit complaints. This is 20-25% of the cost of healthcare.”

For the first time, a leading activist of the Black Lives Matter was fronted in the launch of the M4A bill, speaking to the intersectionality of racial justice and Medicare for All: Patrisse Cullors, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter Global Network (blacklivesmatter.com), noted the history of Medicare in desegregating hospitals, and said that “with Medicare for All we can move closer to racial justice in health care.” She also emphasized the importance of going beyond M4A in addressing racial inequities in the delivery of healthcare.

Representative Matt Cartwright (D-PA) said he was convinced to support M4A by a group of business leaders in his district, and that as a “card-carrying capitalist” who led a law firm for 25 years, M4A is necessary for the success of businesses and entrepreneurs in the United States.

Also unusual this session: two first-year co-sponsors of the bill spoke about how they themselves had been impacted by our broken healthcare system. Representative Nikema Williams (D-GA) spoke about choosing not to receive medical care after a dangerous car accident because the visit to the ER would have been too expensive. Representative Cori Bush (D-MO) spoke about running for state Senate without health insurance, and how she is still dealing with the bills from being admitted to the hospital during that period. Over half of our Members of Congress are millionaires; that we elected Reps this cycle who are able to speak and lead from the perspective of patients is a notable shift towards true representation.

We expect that Bernie Sanders will introduce the companion Medicare for All Act in the Senate within the next two months, and of course, the bill introduction means only that our work for this session has just begun! Reference the back page of the newsletter to see if your Representative has already signed on. HCN!
Transgender Day of Visibility and the Fight for Medicare for All!

By Soña Sepulveda, Texas Organizing Project

March 31st was Transgender Day of Visibility. In our fight for Medicare for all we must include our trans brothers and sisters.

We are under attack. Gov. Hutchinson from Arkansas signed into law a legislation allowing EMT to deny care to us. It is one of many laws across the country targeting trans people.

Studies have shown that transgender care lowers suicide rates in our community, so we need to ensure that our trans community is protected and foster their participation in our movement. In the words of Emma Lazarus, none of us are free until all of us are free. HCN!
Take Action for Single-Payer Healthcare!

Legislation by Rep. Pramila Jayapal would create a single-payer system, “expanded and improved Medicare for all.” Sen. Bernie Sanders will be reintroducing his bill shortly — Senate cosponsors coming next issue!

If you don’t see both your Representative listed as co-sponsors below, make sure to call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to your legislators and ask them to co-sponsor H.R.1976!

114 Current Co-Sponsors of H.R. 1976 (by last name):

Rep. Adams, Alma S. [D-NC-12]
Rep. Beyer, Donald S., Jr. [D-VA-8]
Rep. Blumenauer, Earl [D-OR-3]
Rep. Bonamici, Suzanne [D-OR-1]
Rep. Carstensen, Tony [D-CA-29]
Rep. Cartwright, Matt [D-PA-8]
Rep. Chu, Judy [D-CA-27]
Rep. Cicilline, David N. [D-RI-1]
Rep. Clark, Katherine M. [D-MA-9]
Rep. Clarke, Yvette D. [D-NY-9]
Rep. Cleaver, Emanuel [D-MO-5]
Rep. Davis, Danny K. [D-IL-7]
Rep. DeFazio, Peter A. [D-OR-4]
Rep. DeGette, Diana [D-CO-1]
Rep. DeSaulnier, Mark [D-CA-11]
Rep. Dingell, Debbie [D-MI-12]
Rep. Doggett, Lloyd [D-TX-35]
Rep. Doyle, Michael F. [D-PA-18]
Rep. Escobar, Veronica [D-TX-16]
Rep. Frankel, Lois [D-FL-21]
Rep. Gomez, Jimmy [D-CA-34]
Rep. Green, A.I. [D-TX-9]
Rep. Grijalva, Raul M. [D-AZ-3]
Rep. Harder, Josh [D-CA-10]
Rep. Hayes, Jahana [D-CT-5]
Rep. Higgins, Brian [D-NY-26]
Rep. Huffman, Jared [D-CA-2]
Rep. Jacobs, Sara [D-CA-53]
Rep. Jones, Mondaire [D-NY-17]
Rep. Kahele, Kaiali’i [D-HI-2]
Rep. Kelly, Robin L. [D-IL-2]
Rep. Khanna, Ro [D-CA-17]
Rep. Lang, David [D-CO-10]
Rep. Lawrence, Brenda L. [D-MI-14]
Rep. Lee, Barbara [D-CA-13]
Rep. Levin, Andy [D-MI-9]
Rep. Levin, Mike [D-CA-49]
Rep. Lieu, Ted [D-CA-33]
Rep. Lowenthal, Alan S. [D-CA-47]
Rep. Maloney, Carolyn B. [D-NY-12]
Rep. McNerney, Jerry [D-CA-9]
Rep. Meng, Grace [D-NY-6]
Rep. Mfume, Jimmy [D-MD-7]
Rep. Mfume, Kwesi [D-MD-7]
Rep. Nadler, Jerrold [D-NY-10]
Rep. Neguse, Joe [D-CO-2]
Rep. Newman, Marie [D-IL-3]
Del. Norton, Eleanor Holmes [D-DC-At Large]
Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria [D-NY-14]
Rep. Payne, Donald M., Jr. [D-NJ-10]
Rep. Pingree, Chellie [D-ME-1]
Rep. Pocan, Mark [D-WI-2]
Rep. Porter, Katie [D-CA-45]
Rep. Quigley, Mike [D-IL-5]
Rep. Raskin, Jamie [D-MD-8]
Rep. Roybal-Allard, Lucille [D-CA-40]
Rep. Rush, Bobby L. [D-IL-1]
Del. Sablan, Gregorio Kilili Camacho [D-MP-At Large]
Rep. Sanchez, Linda T. [D-CA-38]
Rep. Sarbanes, John P. [D-MD-3]
Rep. Schakowsky, Janice D. [D-IL-9]
Rep. Schiff, Adam B. [D-CA-28]
Rep. Scott, Robert C. “Bobby” [D-VA-3]
Rep. Sherman, Brad [D-CA-30]
Rep. Smith, Adam [D-WA-9]
Rep. Speier, Jackie [D-CA-14]
Rep. Takano, Mark [D-CA-41]
Rep. Thompson, Ben [D-MT-2]
Rep. Thompson, Mike [D-CA-5]
Rep. Titus, Dina [D-NV-1]
Rep. Trahan, Lori [D-MA-3]
Rep. Vargas, Juan [D-CA-51]
Rep. Veasey, Marc A. [D-TX-33]
Rep. Velázquez, Nydia M. [D-NY-7]
Rep. Waters, Maxine [D-CA-43]
Rep. Watson Coleman, Bonnie [D-NJ-12]
Rep. Welch, Peter [D-VA-32]
Rep. Wild, Susan [D-PA-7]
Rep. Williams, Nikema [D-GA-5]
Rep. Yarmuth, John A. [D-KY-3]

**The Road to 218+51**

Healthcare-NOW took a deep dive on the demographics of the districts we’ve won - and those that remain - and discovered that the unprecedented support for Medicare For All we’ve seen over the past several years has come disproportionately from densely urban districts, solidly Democratic districts, communities of color, and lower-income districts. For the remainder, our movement will need to organize and win in suburban, ex-urban, and rural districts, as well as swing districts and whiter and wealthier communities.


**Next 118 Co-Sponsors**

[Map of the U.S. with percentages indicating the distribution of Co-Sponsors across different regions.]

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of Co-Sponsors</th>
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<td>1.7%</td>
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<td>Great Lakes</td>
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<td>Mountain</td>
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<td>Intermountain</td>
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