



March 3, 2009

Dear PNHP Colleagues,

Activists are encouraged to circulate the following [Action Alerts](#) widely.

[PNHP's letter requesting](#) to be invited to the Health Care Summit, which has not received a response, is at the end, along with a [quote by Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz](#) endorsing single payer as "the only alternative."

Thanks for your support for keeping single payer "on the table" in Washington.

---

## Call The White House: Let Single Payer In

On Thursday, March 5, 2009, the White House will host a summit on how to reform health care.

The 120 invited guests include lobbyists for various interest groups including the private insurance industry (AHIP), some members of Congress including Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, who has already ruled single payer "off the table," and various others concerned with health care.

No single payer advocates have been invited to attend.

Please urge President Obama to fulfill his promise for transparency and openness in government.

**Call The White House (202) 456-1414 or (202) 456-1111.**

Tell them to let single payer into the White House Summit on health care.

Distributed by:

All Unions Committee For Single Payer Health Care--HR 676

c/o Nurses Professional Organization (NPO)

1169 Eastern Parkway, Suite 2218

Louisville, KY 40217

(502) 636 1551

Email: [nursenpo@aol.com](mailto:nursenpo@aol.com)

<http://unionsforsinglepayerHR676.org>

---

## **Not all invited to Obama's Summit on Health Care**

[Email Pres. Obama: What happened to Openess and Transparency?](#)

**Published by Swing State.**

March 3, 2009

One group is being left out of the White House's health reform forum Thursday: supporters of single payer health care.

President Obama has promised an open discussion as he begins an aggressive push for health care reform. Obama said Monday he is "bringing together business and labor, doctors and insurers, Democrats and Republicans" to discuss.

Progressive Democrats of America and Physicians for a National Health Program, leading proponents of expanding Medicare, government-run health care to cover all Americans, have not been invited and are "seeking" an invitation.

John Conyers, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, has become Congress' leader for single payer. He has authored H.R. 676, the model bill for single payer advocates, which has 59 cosponsors. He too has not yet received an invitation.

Liberal health consumer advocate groups such as Families USA and Health Care for America Now are invited and are attending. Neither plan to push single payer.

Even Obama's new nominee to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius' own newly implemented state agency, the Kansas Health Policy Authority, recommended single payer as one of four policy options. Despite the government agency's determination that single payer would be the cheapest,

Kansas has also decided to reject that route thus far.

Despite President Obama's pledge for an open discussion where every position has a seat at the table, one idea seems to be off the table.

---

## PNHP Letter on the White House Summit on Health Care Reform

From: Ida Hellander  
Sent: Wednesday, February 25, 2009 2:05 PM  
To: Engel, Elizabeth (HHS/IOS)  
Subject: PNHP and the Health Care Summit

February 25, 2009

Dear Liz,

I am writing to respectfully request that you invite a representative of Physicians for a National Health Program to participate in next week's health care summit. Single payer national health insurance is not only one of the leading options for reform, it is the one most supported by the evidence. If Obama is to return science to Washington and compassion to health care, single payer must be on the table.

Single payer national health insurance is supported by a majority of the public and physicians, and is the only reform that includes the financing mechanism needed to cover the 47 million uninsured Americans, a critical point for a nation in a recession/depression. Only single payer can slash administrative overhead, freeing up \$400 billion annually for expanding health care coverage. Single payer is also by far the best option for reform in terms of containing the growth in future health spending and "saving" Medicare. The international record of single payer as an equitable, effective, efficient mechanism of financing health care is unparalleled.

Single payer is also the only reform that has a true grassroots movement behind it. In polling as recent as last month, 59 percent of Americans favor a single payer "national health insurance program, in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers." Other polls find even stronger support. An editorial endorsing single payer appeared in yesterday's Seattle Post-Intelligencer (see below).

As you know, PNHP has led the movement for fundamental reform of the health

system for over two decades, and our leaders have produced groundbreaking research. Our 15,000 members across the country include some of the most prominent physicians in American medicine today. Last week, PNHP released a report on the flaws emerging as important lessons from the Massachusetts' health reform plan.

Obama promised "change" during his campaign. If the confining his health care summit to groups like AARP (which receives one-third of their revenues from the sale of insurance) and other groups that have already ruled out single payer as an option for reform, he sends a clear signal that in health care, the scientific evidence, democratic discussion and deliberation is less important than protecting the insurance industry and the status quo.

The PNHP leaders who participated in the "listening meeting" with the Transition Team would make good candidates for participating in the Summit: PNHP President Dr. Oliver Fein, PNHP co-founders Drs. David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler, PNHP Senior Health Policy Fellow Dr. Don McCanne, and PNHP National Coordinator Dr. Quentin Young.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know how you wish to proceed. I may be reached at 312-782-6006, and am happy to provide contact information for our leadership or pass on an invitation through this office.

Yours truly,

**Ida Hellander, MD**  
Executive Director

## **Washington Century: Yes to single-payer**

**Seattle Post-Intelligencer Editorial Board**  
February 24, 2009

We wouldn't blame President Barack Obama if the stimulus fight has dampened his eagerness for taking on health care reform as broadly as the nation needs. But progressive members of Congress and Obama's supporters here and elsewhere must apply pressure for adopting a single-payer national system.

America is decades overdue for the universal health care enjoyed in other countries.

There are a variety of ways to move gradually, including Montana Democratic

Sen. Max Baucus' call for expanding Medicare eligibility to age 55. Combined with the broadening of health care for the young (Washington state is approaching universal access for children), that could arguably put full care within view.

But a Seattle City Council resolution (similar to measures adopted in many other cities and states) has it right in urging congressional passage of one of the single-payer measures offered by U.S. Rep. John Conyers and Jim McDermott. Seattle Councilman Nick Licata explains cities' interests: "We see the real impacts of our communities and constituents suffering." And, like other employers, cities are faced with rising health care premiums.

While Obama must pay attention to the art of the possible, a crisis is the ideal time for fundamental reform. Universal health care would also address the basic economic challenges. If properly funded, it would lift the growing burden of Medicaid health care entitlements from the states and the federal budget.

Just as importantly, though, is addressing the burden of health care costs on employers. Our unique, employer-based system of health care insurance grew out of the post World War II era, when U.S. firms faced no serious rivals. With U.S. workers and firms looking ahead to a recovery, moving health care costs off corporate books would be a major contribution to the future of auto companies, innovative technology firms and every other part of the economy.

---

## qotd: Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz on single payer

Democracy Now!

February 25, 2009

Nobel Prize-Winning Economist Joseph Stiglitz

We get reaction to President Obama's speech from Nobel economics laureate and former World Bank chief economist, Joseph Stiglitz.

**Amy Goodman:** And healthcare? He's called for universal healthcare, but he does not call for single-payer healthcare.

**Joseph Stiglitz:** I think that there are some fundamental problems in the efficiency of our healthcare system. And what we've seen is that the private healthcare insurers do not know how to deliver an efficient way.

**Amy Goodman:** Do you support single-payer healthcare?

**Joseph Stiglitz:** I think I've reluctantly come to the view that it's the only alternative. You know, we've tried a lot of other things. And we've been - you know, I was in the Clinton administration, and we debated a lot of alternatives, and I've watched things as they've emerged and, you know, evolved over the last twelve, sixteen years, and I think there's a growing consensus that the private market exclusion is not going to work.

**Amy Goodman:** Joe Stiglitz, I want to thank you for being with us, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, professor at Columbia University, co-author of *The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict*.

These are the closing comments in this 28 minute video, audio and transcript:  
<http://www.democracynow.org/2009/2/25/stieglitz>

## **Comment by PNHP Senior Health Policy Fellow Dr. Don McCanne: What does Joseph Stiglitz have to say?**

That's a question we ask when we are faced with difficult issues such as the current financial crisis, and what we should do about the troubled banks. To our benefit, Amy Goodman did ask him, and we learn what he has to say.

At the end of the interview, Amy Goodman tacked on this crucial question regarding our health care crisis. Single payer?

Joseph Stiglitz's response must be shared with the nation, and especially with those in Washington who say that single payer is not feasible. We should inundate Washington with his statement that single payer is "the only alternative."

### **Physicians for a National Health Program**

29 E Madison Suite 602, Chicago, IL 60602

Phone (312) 782-6006 | Fax: (312) 782-6007

[www.pnhp.org](http://www.pnhp.org) | [info@pnhp.org](mailto:info@pnhp.org)

© PNHP 2009

If you no longer wish to receive alerts from PNHP, [please email us](#)