

What's to come now that Election Day is behind us?

By Sandy Eaton, RN

This past November I had the honor of attending the strategy meetings of the "Leadership Conference for Guaranteed Healthcare" and "Healthcare-Now" in Philadelphia. While attending, I heard many people thank Massachusetts for the ballot campaigns it ran on Nov. 2 in 14 of its communities. Each of those questions passed by a significant margin, which proves that single payer is still the people's choice.

But I also heard numerous post-election reports from all over the country about the status of single payer in the existing environment. From these reports, I can see that our path ahead is both complex and flexible. We need a two-pronged strategy: one that is defensive and forward moving.

Our defensive strategy starts with combating the federal deficit commission's proposals to attack Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. On Sept. 30, the Capitol switchboard was swamped by callers demanding, "Hands off Social Security, hands off Medicare." We must continue to be aggressive about these efforts. Word is that, at the national level, John Conyers' H.R.676 and Bernie Sanders' S.703 will be re-filed in the coming session.

In terms of being forward moving, I believe that the pendulum has swung back to the states. What a tremendous boost it will be when the first state passes and enacts single payer! Which will be first? Vermont? California? Or maybe Hawaii?

My money is on Vermont—and the good news is that we are close enough to help! ■



"Uh-oh, your coverage doesn't seem to include illness."

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