



HEALTHCARE for ALL!

Missourians for Single Payer Health Care

438 N. Skinker Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63130 ~ Ph: 314.862.5735 ~ www.mosp.us

Message from our vice president

Health Care Reform's Litmus Test: Ask the Right Questions

How does one decide if a health care plan is real reform or is designed to perpetuate the status quo? The status quo in health care has resulted in rapidly rising costs of insurance premiums and out of pocket health care expenses that have left more Americans bankrupt than from any other cause.

Ask the right questions. Does the plan cut massive bureaucratic waste by removing the insurance industry from health care? Does the plan deliver better health care to Americans or simply more profits to the insurance industry? Does the plan eliminate different levels of care for different classes of people?

The result of allocating health care based on wealth is that the working poor suffer more and die younger. Can you live with yourself, if you know you can affect real change, but just go along with the status quo? Power concedes nothing without a demand. Demand universal, single payer health care. Julia Lamborn expressed it succinctly, "Stand up! Speak out! Don't take no for an answer! There is no No!"

—Mimi Signor, RN, Vice President

Winter-Spring 2014 Calendar of Events

*MoSP free public programs are held at the Ethical Society of St. Louis,
9001 Clayton Road in St. Louis, 63117*

Thursday, February 20, 6:30 pm: **"Everybody In! Nobody Out!"** Dr. Judy Dasovich, Physicians for a National Health Program

Thursday, March 20, 6:30 pm: **"The Decline of Public Health in St. Louis"**
Blythe Bernhard, Health and Medicine Reporter, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

Thursday, April 17, 6:30 pm: speaker not confirmed

Saturday, May 10, 7:30 pm: **Mercy Killers**, a play by Michael Milligan

MoSP newsletter staff

Editor-in-Chief,

Mimi Signor

Mailing Committee, Mary

Jane & Bob Schutzzius

Layout editor, Anne Bader

Webmaster, Don Ford

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Inside this issue are photographs of Julia Lamborn, MoSP President from 2001-2013, with commentaries.



The Decline of Public Health in the St. Louis Area



“The Decline of public health in St. Louis” is the topic of MoSP’s March 20 program which reviews the past and recent history of closing public hospitals and clinics here. Blythe

Bernhard, St. Louis Post-Dispatch investigative reporter for health and medicine since 2007, will discuss this disturbing trend and explain reasons why this is happening.

—Roger Signor, *Programs*



Single Payer Advocates’ Voices in the Media

Toni Vafi’s letter to the editor, “Problems with the Affordable Care Act show need for single-payer system”, was selected by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on its Opinion Page December 25 as one of eleven examples of outstanding opinions by readers in 2013.

Susanne Hagan’s letter was published in the Post-Dispatch this January. Also, her letter about the financial ramifications of cancer has been selected for publication in the spring issue of CURE Magazine and/or on their website, www.curetoday.com.

—Mimi Signor, RN

Letter to the Editor, published in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January, 2014

When I read the editorial by Kathleen Sebelius (“A happy, healthy new year,” Jan. 1), my first thought was, she’s been nipping at the holiday eggnog. It sounded almost boozy as she asserted that “today is a new day in health care for millions ... throughout Missouri.”

The fact is that for every Missourian who enrolls in an insurance plan for the first time, there are hundreds who don’t qualify because of a pre-existing condition: they’re too poor to afford the plan. And they don’t qualify for subsidies because our legislators did not expand Medicaid coverage, a linchpin of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Too bad Sebelius wasn’t passing the eggnog around to the legislators in Jefferson City.

In the cold light of day, Sebelius’ optimism sounds ludicrous.

The ACA rests on an icy slope of for-profit insurers whose goal is to line their own pockets. Furthermore, it cements the separation in health care doled out to the poor versus what the wealthier receive. Because of all the profits to be made in health care, we still have a precarious array of multiple insurers with multiple plans. What we need a single-payer plan that rests solidly on one insurer, the Federal government, whose goal is to pay for care, not to turn a profit. A single payer plan would include everyone – no pre-existing conditions apply – and would cover all of us cradle to grave. That would indeed give strength and real meaning to a wish for everyone to have a healthy year.

—Suzanne Hagan, OD



Health Care in the Industrial World

“Health Care in the Industrialized World” the topic discussed by Alan Ranford was MoSP’s first program of 2014. “Reading “*The Healing of America*”, by T.R. Reid, and Dr. Quentin Young’s “*Everybody in, Nobody out*” and further study has made me realize the profound inequities in our health care system.” says Ranford. “When we compare the health of our nation to that of other industrialized nations, it becomes obvious that our system is inefficient and unfair.”

Ranford proposes a commission, with experts such as William Hsiao, to study and evaluate the systems that have worked for other countries. Hsiao, a Profes-

sor of Economics at the Harvard School of Public Health, author of “Getting Health Care Right” has been employed by a number of countries to advise them in forming their health care systems. Hsiao has been involved in shaping Vermont’s new single payer health care law. “Professor Hsiao believes that before you can set up a health care system for any country, you first have to know the country’s basic ethical values,” commented Ranford. “If the nation decides that all of their people have a basic right to health care, then a system can be designed so that each person gets the appropriate medical care. If this right is not valued, then medicine is just another economic commodity based on an individual’s ability to pay.

“This country is split between these two philosophies. Many people are making too much money in the insurance and health care businesses. These people have a powerful influence on our Congress. Obamacare may be all we can expect for the present. We can continue to voice our concerns, work to educate the people and keep up the pressure on the Government. We must maintain faith that Single Payer will eventually become a reality.”

—summary by Suzanne Hagan, OD



“Beyond the Affordable Care Act” is West County Democrats January Program

Drs. William Fogarty and Ed Weisbart spoke on the topic “Beyond the Affordable Care Act: Healthcare Reform 2.0” at the January 13 West County Democrats meeting. They represent Physicians for a National Health Program and advocate for a universal, comprehensive single-payer national health program. They compared U.S. healthcare with the rest of the industrial nations and encouraged everyone to read up on HR676. Drs. Weisbart and Fogarty provided the facts

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“Mercy Killers” the Play:

Saturday, May 10, 2014

Missourians for Single Payer begins its twelfth annual Health Care Weekend with **Mercy Killers**, a one-man play, written and produced by Michael Milligan, who is currently giving his play Off-Broadway. His performance won the 2013 “Fringe First” Award at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. **Mercy Killers** will begin at 7:30 pm, Saturday, May 10, 2014 at the Ethical Society of St. Louis, 9001 Clayton Road. Michael Milligan will participate in a discussion with the audience following the play.

In **Mercy Killers**, his character, Joe struggles with the uniquely American experience of losing your health in the land of plenty. Joe struggles to obtain necessary health care for his beloved wife. They suffered cruel and sometimes barbaric obstacles inherent in profit-driven health care.

The Story: Joe loves apple pie, Rush Limbaugh, the 4th of July and his wife, Jane. He is blue-collar, corn-fed, made in the USA and proud, but when his wife is diagnosed with cancer, his patriotic feelings and passion for the ethos of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are turned upside down. **Mercy Killers** has been nationally acclaimed by drama critics. For more information about the play, go to the website: www.mercykillerstheplay.com.

Michael Milligan is a performer who has been writing and acting for the theater for almost two decades. Milligan has appeared both on and off the Broadway stage and in regional theaters throughout the country. Locally, he has performed in **King Lear** at the Repertory Theater in Webster Groves, and played Mercutio in **Romeo and Juliet** at the opening season of Shakespeare Festival St. Louis. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School.



—Roger Signor, Programs

Julia's Life as MoSP President



Julia and Mimi with Kay Tillon, founder of All Unions for Single Payer, and Marilyn Clements, founder of Health Care Now!, January, 2008



Julia with Congressman Dennis Kucinich, keynote speaker 2005 Health Care Weekend



Julia with University City Mayor Joe Adams at press conference for HR676, June 7, 2006



Julia with Jim Hightower, progressive journalist, Health Care Weekend keynote speaker in 2006



Julia gives Congressman Clay Health Care Advocate Award in 2005

Julia's Life and career before single payer



Julia Lamborn, dancer and entrepreneur, taught dance, created "Bellygrams", owned and managed Ali Baba's, a Middle Eastern restaurant.



Snapshots borrowed from Esther Clark, also known as the dancer, Vashti.



Artist's portrait of Julia.

Hello, Goodbye, Julia

When Julia was diagnosed with aplastic anemia, a blood disorder in which bone marrow stops making blood cells, there was only one possible cure, a bone marrow transplant from an anonymous donor. In order to prevent rejection of the donor marrow, she had to first be irradiated, and then receive chemotherapy to kill her own bone marrow.

Close friends Pat Singley, Carolyn Dawson, and I waited with her in her hospital room for the arrival of the donor marrow on the evening of August 14, 2012. We all fell silent as the nurse brought in the donor marrow. It was pink in color, opaque, similar in appearance to platelets, encased in a see-through infusion bag. Curious, Julia held the bag of marrow, examining it, and then held it to her heart, as if willing it to be the life-saving cure she needed. The infusion took a short period of time while Julia, pre-medicated, slept peacefully. The new bone marrow began making blood cells, and Julia gradually recovered her strength. She was eventually able to walk, drive a car, go out to lunch, and even preside over MoSP's 2013 Health Care Weekend events.

Julia beat the odds, and cheated death for over a year. She was so grateful to everyone who helped give her that chance. On December 25, 2013 with Pat, Carolyn and I holding her hands, her favorite cooking channel on TV in the background, she smiled, thinking about her wonderful dogs. She succumbed to pneumonia, and slept peacefully.

—*Mimi Signor, RN*

Julia Lamborn, Friend and Leader

Julia Lamborn served as President of Missourians for Single Payer from 2001-2013. She died December 25, 2013 from pneumonia. She told me, “no funeral, memorial service, fanfare, nor an obituary”. I am letting my conscience guide me in this simple newsletter acknowledgement of how much she was valued as

a friend and a leader of the single payer movement. She would want me to thank those who helped her through an extended serious illness: Thanks to all the loyal friends who visited her, brought her delicious foods, read to her, manicured her nails, did her laundry, gave her massages, and lifted her spirits. Thanks to all the attending physicians, nurses, aides, and patient care techs at Barnes Jewish Hospital for their skills and compassion. And special thanks to her doctor, Camille Abboud, MD and his nurse practitioner, Jeanne Kuensting for believing in her and her ability to survive and thrive, despite her diagnosis of aplastic anemia.

—*Mimi Signor, RN*

Julia's death continues to reverberate in our community. We may not agree with Julia's wish to not have a memorial, but I believe that part of our honoring her should be to honor her wishes. I think there are ways to meet the needs of those who would like to remember and honor Julia. One is to share memories of her at Remembrance Sunday, May 25, 2014 at 11 am. Perhaps a Tuesday Women's Association lunch may have an informal sharing circle for people to share their feelings. Julia would likely most love some kind of fundraiser for MoSP. I ask those who loved Julia to find a way to express that love in a creative way that also respects her wish to not have a memorial.

—*Kate Lovelady, Leader, Ethical Society of St. Louis*

“We lost a valiant leader and dedicated member of our cause. She was a fine woman who would not accept less than the credo of MOSP, “Everyone in; no one out.”

—*Lee Kraemer, MoSP Labor Liaison*

Julia had such a strong presence at the Ethical Society; Chairperson of the Ethical Action Committee, Chair of the Program Council, member of TWA, President of Single Payer Health Care.

—*Arlene Nickels, MoSP and Ethical Society*

I had a dream about Julia a few nights ago; it was so real that I thought perhaps I had died and met her in Heaven or wherever we go when we are gone. She was smiling, and healthy, and beautiful and glowing like she was on the day we met. I woke myself up pretty quickly because it was actually heartbreaking, even though it seemed like she was finally happy. I keep trying to put words on paper, but it's hard. Part of me thinks that if I don't write it out, I can keep pretending that she is still there, doing her thing... rocking the world. She was so influential in my life, and I hope that she knows that, wherever she is. She was a fierce warrior for justice.

—**Lindy Hern**, *PhD, Health Care for All Hawaii*

We'll always remember her as a person dedicated to providing good health care for everyone at the lowest cost. She was always appreciated for participating in Black & Green Wednesday programs when we discussed needed changes in the U.S. health system. When in Cuba, I interviewed several doctors about the early years of their developing a system of free community medicine to everyone on the island. I know that Julia would have liked to hear about how the Cubans do it.

—**Don Fitz**, *Gateway Green Alliance*

I will always remember Julia Lamborn for her courage, her fearlessness, her independence of thought, consistency, persistence, and her disarmingly dry humor followed by her quick smile and twinkle in the eye. I will always be thankful to Julia for leading the Ethical Action Committee at the St. Louis Ethical Society for a number of years. I will also be eternally grateful to Julia for her tireless advocacy and leadership of Missourians for Single Payer, including annually arranging for a prominent speaker to address the St. Louis Ethical Society on the need for Single Payer healthcare.

—**Ginger Harris**, *MoSP and Ethical Society*

We were privileged to meet and to know Julia even if mostly from a distance. Our thoughts go out to our single payer family in Missouri. We hold you in our hearts. “Julia Lamborn presente”—as they say in the countries to the south of us.

—**Kay Tillow**, *All Unions for Single Payer*



“Friends, Happy New Year!”

“I hope you can read my op-ed in today's New York Times (http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/01/opinion/moore-the-obamacare-we-deserve.html?_r=0). In it I admit the forbidden truth that liberals have dared not speak: that Obamacare isn't the fix we needed. Why? Because it's a right-wing concept dedicated to keeping the private insurance industry (and its profits) intact.

Whether you live in a red, blue or purple state, there are important new ways for you to fight on a local level to move us toward that goal – ways that you may not have heard anywhere before now. So I hope you can read my piece and get involved. We can't leave this in the hands of President Obama or Nancy Pelosi or any other politician. Universal healthcare didn't get on the agenda because of them, and the day it finally happens, it won't be thanks to them either. It'll be because of us. Let's get to work in 2014!”

Michael Moore, January 1, 2014

MMFlint@MichaelMoore.com, [@MMFlint](https://twitter.com/MMFlint)

MichaelMoore.com



West County Democrats January Program

(from page 3)

behind the importance of expanding Medicaid in Missouri, and discussed the importance of conversion of the private insurance system in the U.S. to a single payer health care system.

—*Suzanne Reinhold.*

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_____ I'm unable to pay dues at this time, but I will support and promote MoSP among relatives, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, however I can. Please continue to send me the newsletter. Please call on me for volunteer help.