



How to Plan and Host a House Party for Health Care Financing Reform

Before the event:

Plan ahead. Start planning several weeks ahead of time so that you'll never feel like you're in a rush. Make a list of everyone you would like to invite, with contact information.

Decide if you would like to include entertainment, food, or beverages. You could provide them or ask people to make it a potluck.

Send out an invite about a month ahead of time. Invitations can be sent by regular mail, email, Facebook or other online tool, depending on your audience. A personal, face-to-face invitation with a flyer is also an option. It's important to include basic information about the event, including RSVP information, food or drink offerings, the time and date, and directions to the house. It's always a good idea to send out a reminder messages two weeks before the event, either by phone or electronically, and just prior to the event.

Call up the people that you still haven't heard from a week before the event and personally invite them. The time and effort of a phone conversation can make all the difference in attendance.

During the event:

Have a table set up near guests with two or three informational handouts, a sign-in sheet, pens, and name tags. It's a good idea to have a second person helping you with the event, so there's someone to make sure people sign in, make coffee, etc.

Introductions:

Once everyone has arrived, introduce yourself and ask people to sign in if they haven't already. Speak briefly about why you were moved to host this house party. If you or a family member has a compelling healthcare story, now is a good time to tell it. Depending on how large the group is, you can ask everyone to introduce themselves and share briefly their reason for coming. (If you have more than 10-15 people, skip the "why they came" part.) Then move on to the rest of the content of the event. See the following pages for ideas.

At the End

Always leave people with some kind of action(s) they can take after they leave. It can be

1. Ask them to call or email an elected official about single payer healthcare. Prepare a handout with either the contact information for the official (if it's a national or statewide official) or a link to help people find out who represents them: <http://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>. Include a brief script or paragraph to base the message on. Be sure to mention a bill number and/or author's name if you're calling about a specific bill. For example: "I'm calling to ask you to support HR676, Representative Conyers's Medicare for All bill..."
2. Attend an upcoming event (prepare and handout with details).
3. Take electronic action (sign a petition, join a Facebook group, etc).
4. Ask for a contribution for your organization (TakeAction Minnesota, Physicians for a National Health Program, Health Care for All Minnesota, etc). It's a great practice for building up our efforts. When people contribute money to a cause, their chances of donating again, volunteering in the future, and talking with their friends and family about the issue dramatically increase.

After the event:

Compile all the sign-ins for the event and send them a quick thank-you note (via mail or email). This is also your chance to say anything you may have forgotten to add during the event. Give the sign-ins to your organization (TakeAction, MNA, PNHP, HCAMN) to add to their list of healthcare activists.

Complete all your follow-up work, such as sending more information, or answering lingering questions. This is the hardest part of any event, and the easiest to forget. The main purpose of a House Party is to build for the future, and following-up is essential to get -- and keep -- new people involved.

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