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With a new year ***Healthcare for All – SC*** [HFA-SC] is eager to jump into the fight. In South Carolina, as with many states this means taking sides on Medicaid expansion. Governor Nikki Haley is staunchly opposed to expansion and remains openly hostile to Federal health initiatives. HFA-SC holds the position that Medicaid expansion is a vital step towards health care for all South Carolinians, particularly the most vulnerable.

**INSIDE** - Quarterly meetings seem to be about right for us. Our first of the year was held January 30th at a medical office park in Columbia. Hosted by our Midlands Ambassador, it included a number of regulars as well as new voices from organized Labor and an elder-care attorney. Much of the meeting was devoted to planning for our first “outside” event planned for March 9th.

When possible we are participating with national calls with PNHP and Progressive Democrats of America (PDA), and regional calls with Healthcare-NOW!. While we are not in partnership with PDA (as we are non-partisan) the group has a strong Single Payer agenda and is very active.

**Dr. Emilio Perez-Jorge**

**Midlands Ambassador**

**OUTSIDE** – One of our members (Donna Dewitt) received the prestigious 2013 Harvey Gantt Triumph Award along with Congressman John Lewis as part of the celebration of Martin Luther King week. Through miscommunication we failed to meet with national representatives of the National Nurses Union (NNU) planned after the event.

Ricky Ball, a founding member of HFA-SC and Massachusetts resident, wrote to America’s newest US Senator, Elizabeth Warren to request support for Single Payer. In the letter Warren was encouraged, as the new member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions to help us move the ball.

As Massachusetts currently has legislation pending, David Linsky, a State Representative and Ball family friend, was urged to cosponsor the bill. Interestingly, he responded;

*I fully support the laudable goals of single payer health care and enthusiastically support it at a federal level. However, I have concluded that it can only be successful if implemented at a national, and not in a single-state, level. The cost is simply too high for a state to do on its own. I am hopeful that the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act aka “Obamacare” will eventually lead to national single payer healthcare. In the event single payer health care legislation comes to the House floor this session I will be supportive.*

This begs the question whether HFA-SC should attempt to have legislation introduced in Columbia for Single Payer or whether the Representative is correct that the economics of state implementation of Universal Health Care as a legitimate path to Single Payer in America are doomed to failure.

**AMBASSADORS** –

Midlands Ambassador Emilio Perez-Jorge produced the first-quarter internal HFA-SC meeting on January 30th. He is currently helping lead a small group planning the first “outside” event as we welcome Dr. Art Sutherland, National Board member with PNHP, on March 9th.

We continue to seek members to represent Upstate, Pee Dee, and Lowcountry regions.