



## A GUIDE FOR STUDENT CHAPTERS

Welcome to PNHP - physicians, nurses, physicians in training, and other health professionals working to implement a National Health Insurance (NHI) System in the US! In this manual you will find information on starting a chapter, ideas for events and projects, event planning tips and general recommendations. Please use it as a general guide for your chapter, its activities and its membership.

If you have any questions, suggestions or ideas for this manual or about student activities, please feel free to contact [david.marcus@downstate.edu](mailto:david.marcus@downstate.edu).

**Everybody deserves health insurance, now make it happen!**

### How to start a student chapter:

1. Get your friends interested and build a team!
2. Get recognized by your school (office of student affairs or student activities center).
3. Get funded by your student council or fundraisers.
4. Hold a general interest meeting for the student body, briefly describing Single Payer NHI and PNHP.
5. Encourage members of all schools to join PNHP and to help you organize events on campus.
6. Have a blockbuster first event - a debate between PNHP and AMA is an old favorite.
7. Conduct events on campus, promote monthly forums, chapter meetings, and the PNHP national conference.
8. Use resources from regional and national offices.
9. Have a great time!!!

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## Top 10 Project Ideas

1. **PNHP-AMA Healthcare Debate** - representatives from the two organizations discuss covering the uninsured. These almost always draw a very large crowd and are a great way to involve another student group that often has a large membership.
2. **Invite a PNHP Speaker and hold informational sessions** - on HR676 and NHI and on other relevant developments (such as Medicare Part D, Massachusetts Health Insurance Bill). Contact the regional speaker's bureau ([jlandy@iqc.org](mailto:jlandy@iqc.org)) or find knowledgeable and sympathetic faculty at your school.
3. **Political activities** - letter writing or call-in campaigns to local representatives, cooperation with AMSA lobby days and rallies.
4. **Cover the Uninsured Week** - Coordinated nationally by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. A great time to raise awareness of the more than 46 million uninsured Americans. You can hold workshops for the uninsured, cooperate with low-cost city health plan recruiters, conduct vigils and demonstrations, bring in speakers to discuss disparities in medicine and insurance coverage, etc, etc, etc...
5. **Make sure that Single Payer and HR676 are formally included in your curriculum wherever health policy is discussed**
6. **Flyers and Posters at School** - Pique curiosity and correct misconceptions about NHI. Hang inside classrooms, bathrooms, lecture halls, labs, dorms, anywhere (without getting in trouble).
7. **Reach out to your neighbors!** Contact area high schools and offer to speak with students about health insurance and the difficult situations faced by American families. Have a PNHP table at fairs.
8. **Lunch-time discussions** about issues related to the uninsured.
9. **Informal events** - cafes, bars and bookstores are great places for casual discussions on healthcare.
10. **Comparative Healthcare Tour** – PNHP's Buffaronto or AMSA's SeaCouver.



## Tips on Planning and Running Events

- × **Plan early for the entire year.** Invite speakers and book venues before they become unavailable.
- × **Break down the work among your chapter leadership/committee and have planning meetings apart from events.**
- × **Maintain a chapter website/listserv.**
- × **When planning, reach out to other student organizations** - SNMA, AMWA, AMSA, ethnic organizations, Primary Care Interest Groups, LGBT student groups, and student-run free clinics may all have similar interests. If they co-sponsor with you, your event will have a broader interest base and more funding.
- × **Order food!** This is a guaranteed way to get students to go anywhere, but beware of those that will eat and leave; try to find a way to maintain high attendance throughout the entire event.
- × **Schedule events away from exams** and try not to schedule events on the day of an exam - people really will not want to hang around.
- × **Lunch events** - generally limited to approximately 40 minutes of meeting time. Also, attendance might be narrow, since not everyone has lunch at the same time.
- × **Evening (dinner) events** - generally well attended if you have a good group of interested students. Also, they permit more time and you may get broader attendance. However, you have to consider that many people will leave right after class and might not stay for the event.
- × **Advertise broadly** – to all classes and schools on your campus. PNHP membership is not limited to physicians, remember to include nursing, public health, law and any other students you can reach.
- × **Advertise early** – via posters and emails (once, one week before the event and once again one or two days before the event).
- × **Specifically invite faculty** to participate in PNHP events.
- × **Always have sign in sheets and handouts available** – use these to make a mailing list and also to advertise upcoming forums and events.



## General Recommendations

- × Have PNHP information sent out to all incoming students with their welcome packet or orientation binder and have a table at the Student Activities/Clubs Fair.
- × Involve 1<sup>st</sup> yr. students early on in order to guarantee continuity and motivation.
- × Be a presence on campus. Everyone should know about PNHP and that they can turn to you for information on health policy.
- × Maintain an email list and a weekly/monthly newsletter with a summary of news on NHI. You can get items by signing up to Don McCanne's Quote of the Day ([www.PNHP.org](http://www.PNHP.org)). Also, get email alerts via the Kaiser Family Foundation ([www.KFF.org](http://www.KFF.org)), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ([www.RWJF.org](http://www.RWJF.org) and [www.covertheuninsured.org](http://www.covertheuninsured.org)), AMSA's Health Policy Listserv (see [www.AMSA.org](http://www.AMSA.org)), the Commonwealth Fund ([www.cmwf.org](http://www.cmwf.org)) or from any other organization that maintains an email alert service.
- × Take every opportunity to remind students of health disparities and the need for systemic reform. Post new facts, newsworthy items and upcoming events around campus. (As students have more clinical experience, they will undoubtedly be barriers to access to healthcare. This is the time to give them the tools to advocate for meaningful change).
- × Utilize your school's resources to spread your message. The campus library display may be open to student groups and offers a public venue for our advocacy. Also, contact PNHP members who are in faculty positions at your school. Joint efforts between medical students and faculty physicians are especially rewarding.
- × Attend the Leadership Training offered by the NY Metro Chapter each Spring. This is an excellent opportunity to become more comfortable advocating for single payer and to fine-tune your knowledge of health policy. In addition, ask a PNHP member to run a Leadership Training on your campus, especially for your chapter officers/committee.
- × **Encourage people to JOIN PNHP via the PNHP website or by filling out a form + check (it's only \$20 for students)!**

## How to Contact Us

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