

2018-2019

# Chapter Start-Up Guide



Students for a National Health Program

# In This Guide:

<a href="#"><u>What is PNHP and SNaHP?</u></a> .....	2
<a href="#"><u>Starting your chapter</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>Sample charter</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>Tips and tactics</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>Sample calendar for academic year</u></a> .....	8
<a href="#"><u>Getting more involved</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>SNaHP Leadership Teams</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>PNHP Annual Meeting and Leadership Training</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>Mentoring Program</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>SNaHP Summit</u></a> .....	11
<a href="#"><u>Resources for your chapter</u></a> .....	12
<a href="#"><u>PNHP staff</u></a> .....	12
<a href="#"><u>Single payer allies</u></a> .....	13
<a href="#"><u>Slideshows and Videos</u></a> .....	13

*This guide was adapted from the student strategy sessions of PNHP's Annual Meeting and Leadership Training, plus workshops from the 2017 SNaHP Summit, and resources from various PNHP student chapters.*

*It was edited by the SNaHP Education and Base Building Leadership Team.  
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# What is PNHP and SNaHP?

Students for a National Health Program (SNaHP) is the student arm of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP). PNHP is a single-issue organization advocating a universal, comprehensive single-payer national health program. PNHP has more than 19,000 members and chapters across the United States.

Since 1987, PNHP has advocated for reform in the U.S. health care system. The organization works to educate physicians and other health professionals about the benefits of a single-payer system--including fewer administrative costs and affording health insurance for the 50 million Americans who have none.

PNHP members and physician activists work toward a single-payer national health program in their communities. The organization performs ground breaking research on the health crisis and the need for fundamental reform, coordinates speakers and forums, participates in town hall meetings and debates, contributes scholarly articles to peer-reviewed medical journals, and appears regularly on national television and news programs advocating for a single-payer system. PNHP is the only national physician organization in the United States dedicated exclusively to implementing a single-payer national health program.

SNaHP grew organically out of PNHP and AMSA as a platform for medical and health professional students to become single payer advocates. In 2012, two medical students organized a day-long conference of thirty-five students for single payer in PNHP's headquarters in Chicago, calling it the SNaHP Summit. Since then, the summit has more than doubled in size and is now held annually at rotating medical institutions in Chicago. The number of medical and health professional student chapters of PNHP (often, but not always, referred to as "SNaHP chapters") has grown exponentially. Most of the information found here can also be found on our website at [student.pnhp.org](http://student.pnhp.org).



# Starting Your Chapter

1. Look into your school's guidelines for starting a student group. The best time of year to think about starting a group is several months ahead of the new school year. This will give you enough time to fill out necessary paperwork and start recruiting founding members.
2. Contact PNHP at (312) 782-6006 or [organizer@pnhp.org](mailto:organizer@pnhp.org). The National Organizer will help you to identify PNHP members from the faculty of your medical school who might serve as a mentor or sponsor of your group, and connect you to other PNHP student leaders in your area.
3. Have an initial meeting of interested medical students. Your group should discuss the following:
  - What does your chapter hope to accomplish? What kinds of leadership roles are needed to facilitate those actions?
  - How often will your chapter meet, and how?
  - How will your chapter be structured and how will your group make decisions?
  - What kind of leadership positions will your chapter have?
  - How will your chapter grow? Who do you hope to recruit into your chapter?
  - What kinds of other student groups or civic organizations will your chapter partner with, if any? Is there a process for working with other like-minded groups?
4. Create a "Chapter Charter." The charter is a statement of intent to the national headquarters of PNHP and should be signed by at least five founding members (see sample charter on the following page). The charter signers can be all students, but you might optionally consider asking your faculty adviser to sign as well. Send your signed charter to [organizer@pnhp.org](mailto:organizer@pnhp.org), fax to 312-782-6007, or send by mail to 29 E. Madison Street, Suite 1412, Chicago, IL 60602. **All signatories of the Chapter Charter should be members of PNHP, or join PNHP upon signing.** Student memberships are free! Join at [www.pnhp.org/join](http://www.pnhp.org/join)
5. Begin planning a kick-off event, such as a film screening, panel discussion or speaker. The National Organizer at PNHP can help you with ideas, acquire the rights to show certain films, provide lists of members to invite, and help book speakers from PNHP.
6. Most universities have an Activity Fair at the beginning of the school year. Contact your school about reserving a table, and email PNHP at [organizer@pnhp.org](mailto:organizer@pnhp.org) to receive materials for your table (such as sign-up sheets, posters, handouts and buttons). Make sure to have a flyer for your kick-off event at the table!

Physicians for a National Health Program  
 29 E. Madison, Ste. 1412  
 Chicago, IL 60602

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Physicians for a National Health Program,

We, the undersigned \_\_\_\_\_ (medical/health professional/pre-med) students,  
 seek to start a student chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program at \_\_\_\_\_  
 (institution) in \_\_\_\_\_ (city, state). The name of our chapter will be  
 \_\_\_\_\_. We would like to have access to the resources of PNHP to advocate for a  
 single-payer health care system as outlined by the Physicians' Proposal (JAMA, 2003):

1. Access to comprehensive health care is a human right. It is the responsibility of society, through its government, to assure this right. Coverage should not be tied to employment.
2. The right to choose and change one's physician is fundamental to patient autonomy. Patients should be free to seek care from any licensed health care professional.
3. Pursuit of corporate profit and personal fortune have no place in caregiving. They create enormous waste and too often warp clinical decision making.
4. In a democracy, the public should set health policies and budgets. Personal medical decisions must be made by patients with their caregivers, not by corporate or government bureaucrats.

Sincerely,

First Name	Last Name	Email	Graduation Year

# Tips and Tactics

## Developing Your Chapter

**Define short and long-term objectives.** Try to include at least one objective that is small and localized enough to be winnable in the short-term. For example:

- Try to integrate more health policy (and relevance of single payer) into medical school curriculum
- Establish a healthy student PNHP chapter with medical school funding
- Expose each new medical student class to the arguments for single payer
- Speak to your Congressperson about co-sponsoring [HR 676](#), "Expanded and Improved Medicare for All" or Senator about co-sponsoring [S1804](#), "Medicare for All Act of 2017"

## **Find allies.**

- Faculty and residents:
  - Contact the Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR) chapter if your institution has one
  - Check with the national PNHP office for faculty who are members to serve as mentors and faculty advisers
- Other medical students:
  - AMSA supports single payer and is often well-established at medical schools. Join AMSA's Health Care for All campaign, which is dedicated to advancing single payer ([amsa.org/advocacy/health-care/](http://amsa.org/advocacy/health-care/)) or get involved with the HCFA Scholars Program ([amsa.org/members/career/scholars-programs/hcfa/](http://amsa.org/members/career/scholars-programs/hcfa/)). Their chair can be reached at [hcfa.chair@amsa.org](mailto:hcfa.chair@amsa.org)
  - Several other medical student groups are great for partnering on events, such as Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), and the National Medical Student Association (NMSA).
  - While the American Medical Association is not as an organization in favor of a national health program, many local AMA-MSS delegates are (and the number is growing!). It is worth feeling out your institution's delegates and building a relationship.
- Other health professionals & health professional students:
  - You might consider inviting students from other health professionals such as public health, nursing, dentistry, physical therapy, etc... to join the group.
  - Check your school's list of registered student organizations to see if there are any groups that seem relevant or potentially sympathetic. Email the group's leaders and either invite their members to an event, or ask to give a presentation on single payer at their next meeting.
- PNHP Members
  - Physician PNHP members are your greatest allies! The national office will provide a list of members in your area, and they are usually delighted to help in any way they can to help your chapter thrive. If there is a local PNHP chapter in your area (check the PNHP website to see), consider joint events, informal potlucks, mentoring, and even help with fundraising.

### **Develop a web presence.**

- Create some way to communicate with your members on social media - Twitter and Facebook are popular and pretty effective, as are creating simple web sites on Tumblr or Wordpress.
- Post resources, current events, pictures of past events, etc...
- Identify who the group is and what is the mission, and ways to get in touch with leaders.
- Make sure it is someone's definite role to maintain the website/twitter/facebook page.
- Create an email for your chapter using gmail (for example: [uicsnahp@gmail.com](mailto:uicsnahp@gmail.com) or [snahp@uic.edu](mailto:snahp@uic.edu)).

### **Appoint or elect positions.**

- This works best if positions entail specific, well-defined tasks. It helps increase accountability and decrease confusion
- Most PNHP student chapters have at least a President and often a Co-President. However, feel free to develop a structure that works for your group, and make sure you've talked through how your group will make decisions (majority vote? consensus? flipping a coin? Etc.)

### Planning Events

#### **Scheduling:**

- Big events like day-long conferences should be scheduled at least six to eight weeks in advance. Others, like bringing in out-of-town speakers, should be scheduled at least a month in advance.
- Be conscious of exam dates and class schedules. When mapping out your year with your group's leadership, try to have a copy of the academic calendar on hand.
- Lunch events work well if your classmates are on campus during the day - it is more difficult to encourage attendance at evening or weekend events.

#### **Advertising:**

- Maintain a list of members and email one week before the event and one day before the event. Short emails with snappy subject lines are the most effective.
- Make announcements in first and second year classes on the morning of the event.
- Word of mouth is important - so talk it up!

#### **Food:**

- Schedule delivery at least 15 minutes prior to the time of the event
- Consider out-of-the-box and healthy options
- For evening events, consider potlucks or dessert-only
- Remember to let PNHP's national office know about your event ahead of time and send your receipts to them afterwards - PNHP will reimburse up to \$150 for a student event

#### **Capturing Attendance:**

- ALWAYS have a sign-in sheet. It's a good idea for the event organizers to fill in the first space with complete information (name, year, email, etc....). Attendees will be more likely to sign up if they see other people have already done so.
- For larger events, have someone stand near the door asking folks to sign in.
- ALWAYS make a verbal pitch to join PNHP. Membership is **free**, and they can join online. Alternatively, you can have a check box on your sign-in sheet that says, "I would like to become a member of PNHP". You can then enter in these new memberships yourself online (membership is free) or send copies of the sign-ins to PNHP's national office.
- Consider having brief evaluations for talks, panels, and debates to improve for the

future Program Ideas

### **Lunch lectures**

- These are often well-attended (food is always a draw), and convenient for people coming straight from class. Lunch lectures are great for shorter presentations.
- Lunch lectures are perfect for introductory events or series. It's an excellent way to engage PNHP members who are faculty at your institution (by attending the event or presenting the topic) and familiarizing the student body to your group.
- Keep in mind that lunch-time lectures are often constricted by time and typically don't allow for in-depth discussion

### **Dinner events**

- Informal potlucks and catered dinners at the home of your faculty adviser or another faculty PNHP member have become very popular over the years. Dinners hosted by physicians allow for lots of networking and organic dialogue. Often, dinners formatted this way have less of a specific focus on single payer in order to allow maximum participation. These are great events for outreach to other health professional student organizations.

### **Debates**

- Well-planned debates are often the highlight of a PNHP student chapter's year. They help the audience understand the arguments for and against a national health program, and having big names participate are a great draw. Chapters might, for example, bring in a national PNHP leader to debate a representative from the AMA.
- Make sure you give yourself adequate time to plan, especially since it involves coordinating multiple schedules.
- If the debate involves local or national leaders, consider inviting media - In the past, some chapters have succeeded in getting the debate recorded for radio or covered by local news outlets.

### **Film Screenings**

- Film screenings are easy to organize and promote, and you can borrow many relevant films from the PNHP national office. They make for a great follow-up event after a larger program to capture momentum.
- Following the film, consider how to channel the energy in the room into action - Having a faculty member facilitate a dialogue, asking participants to write letters to the editor, sign a petition, join PNHP, or brainstorm sessions are all appropriate post-film activities.



## Sample Calendar for Academic Year

Month:	Event/Program:	Purpose:	Tips:
August	Table at your institution's Activities Fair	Recruit new members for your group	Make sure to get tabling material from the national office by contacting <a href="mailto:organizer@pnhp.org">organizer@pnhp.org</a>
	Have a planning meeting with core leaders	Make a "game plan" for the academic year and decide on roles for accountability	Involve your faculty adviser! Your adviser, especially if they are a PNHP member, is an excellent resource for advice and ideas.
September	Host a "Single Payer 101" event	Introduce students to health policy, inequality, and the basics of single payer	Contact the national office to help identify a compelling speaker  Host event during noon hour or dinner time to maximize attendance (PNHP will reimburse up to \$100 for food at this kind of event)
October	Get involved with PNHP students nationally	Start connecting with the larger movement for single payer	Apply for the PNHP Mentoring Program this month
	Host a "Policy and Pints" night, happy hour, or coffee discussion group on a relevant current event issue	Leadership identification and development	Have group members join SNaHP National Leadership Teams and report back to local group  Having a follow-up event to the "Single Payer 101" program will keep students interested.
November	Attend the PNHP Annual Meeting and Leadership training	Develop leadership skills, learn in-depth health policy	Take the suggested student track to connect with medical students from around the country, this is an amazing networking opportunity!
December	Strategy Meeting	Plan Spring semester programs	December is a challenging time to do anything, but make sure to meet before winter break to make plans for the spring semester.
	Speaker Training	Education	Use what you learned at the Annual Meeting and Leadership Training and replicate a piece of it at your university for students.

January	Host a debate or lobby day	Education and recruitment, leadership development	Early in the semester is the best time to have big events - the farther into spring you get, the harder it will be to pull off anything due to exam schedules.
February/ March	Attend Annual SNaHP Summit	National movement building, leadership development	
March	Film screening of The Healthcare Movie, Sicko, The Waiting Room, etc....	Education and recruitment	You can borrow most of these films from the PNHP national office by emailing <a href="mailto:organizer@pnhp.org">organizer@pnhp.org</a>
April	Give a presentation about single payer to another student group	Coalition-Building, education	Consider approaching another medical student group like LMSA, SNMA, or PSR and asking to “crash” their meeting to give a presentation on single payer, and invite them to do the same for your PNHP group. This will open the door for future solidarity actions.
May	Participate in National Single Payer Lobby Day	Political engagement and organizing	PNHP and a coalition of other single payer organizations host this national lobby day for HR 676 - Keep your eye out for announcements and details from PNHP
June	Wrap-up of year event/transition leadership	Transition	<p>Make sure not to finish the year without officially “handing over” leadership of the chapter to new leaders, ideally current M1’s.</p> <p>Reflect on your experience as chapter leader with the new leaders - What went well? What would you change if you could go back?</p>
July	Celebrate Medicare’s birthday on July 30th	Organizing Opportunity	Medicare’s birthday is an excellent opportunity to work with allied organizations. It’s summer, so think about having an outdoor event like a “birthday party” or rally

# Getting More Involved

## SNaHP Leadership Teams

SNaHP's leadership structure has been evolving as the student movement for single payer has begun to snowball. At the 3rd SNaHP Summit in 2014, attendees at a national strategy session formed three leadership teams centered around core focus issues. The leadership teams are:

### **Education and Base Building Team**

The Education and Base Building Team exists to help grow the student membership in PNHP and organize and support emerging SNaHP chapters.

### **Political Advocacy Team**

This team focuses on coordinating advocacy for national single payer legislation, and also works to assist local SNaHP chapters to coordinate local lobby days and develop localized campaigns.

### **Media Team**

The Media Team functions in tandem with the other teams to develop and deepen the outreach in conjunction with the communications specialist(s) on the PNHP staff.

Contact [organizer@pnhp.org](mailto:organizer@pnhp.org) if you are interested in joining any of the SNaHP Leadership teams, or if you would like to learn more.

## PNHP Annual Meeting and Leadership Training

The PNHP Annual Meeting brings together the nation's leading physician voices for single payer, international health systems experts, and compelling keynote speakers to discuss the latest developments in health policy each November. PNHP also hosts a one-of-a-kind Leadership Training the day prior to the Annual Meeting, which is an excellent "crash course" in health policy and the case for national health insurance. Aimed specifically towards physician activists, the Leadership Training builds participants' skills around speaking, chapter organizing, and lobbying for single payer.

Through PNHP's Nick Skala Student Activist fund ([www.pnhp.org/skalafund](http://www.pnhp.org/skalafund)), travel scholarships are available for medical and health professional students to attend both of these events. Become a member of PNHP at [www.pnhp.org/join](http://www.pnhp.org/join) and keep your eye out for emails regarding application deadlines. Information is posted in late summer at [www.pnhp.org](http://www.pnhp.org) about the Annual Meeting and Leadership Training.

## PNHP Mentoring Program

The PNHP Mentoring Program pairs medical and health professional students with experienced physicians, residents, and medical professionals. The goal of the program is to create a groundswell of single payer advocates in the medical community, while supporting new activists

as they organize both in their schools and nationally for a single payer health system. Mentees have the outstanding opportunity to develop a professional relationship with some of the most prominent voices for single payer in the country. Health professional students accepted into the PNHP Mentoring Program receive special consideration for scholarship funding to PNHP events, and also are invited to participate in a PNHP Mentoring Reception at the Annual Meeting.

Mentee applications open in mid-August and matches are typically made by mid-October for the academic year. See [www.pnhp.org/mentoring](http://www.pnhp.org/mentoring) for more information.

## **SNaHP Summit**

The SNaHP Summit is an annual conference of medical and health professional students. Typically held each spring at rotating institutions in Chicago, the summit is completely dedicated to training students to become advocates for universal, single-payer health insurance. It's an amazing opportunity to network with medical students from around the country, and all of the content is student-facilitated. Go to [www.pnhp.org/student-summit](http://www.pnhp.org/student-summit) for more information.

Attendees are eligible for Nick Skala Student Activist Scholarship Funding for traveling to and from the summit. Become a member of PNHP at [www.pnhp.org/join](http://www.pnhp.org/join) and keep your eye out for emails regarding application deadlines. Membership is free for students!



# Resources for your Chapter

## PNHP National Staff\*:

**Matthew Petty, Executive Director**  
[matt@pnhp.org](mailto:matt@pnhp.org)

Contact for: Help with questions about reimbursements and scholarships, history of PNHP

**Clare Fauke, Communications Specialist**  
[clare@pnhp.org](mailto:clare@pnhp.org)

Contact for: Help writing and placing an op-ed, questions about getting media coverage

**Dixon Galvez-Searle, Communications Specialist**  
[dixon@pnhp.org](mailto:dixon@pnhp.org)

Contact for: Help with social media, designing a website, e-mail blasts, or technical issues

**Matt Moy, Interim National Organizer**  
[m.moy@pnhp.org](mailto:m.moy@pnhp.org) or [organizer@pnhp.org](mailto:organizer@pnhp.org)

Contact for: Help starting a chapter, organizing an event, getting a PNHP speaker, getting funding for chapter, questions about programs and conferences, getting lists of local PNHP members, getting supplies for tabling and events

**Angela Fegan, Membership Associate**  
[angela@pnhp.org](mailto:angela@pnhp.org)

Contact for: Getting lists of local PNHP members, getting supplies for events, changing your address or contact information, help with graphic design

\*Contact [info@pnhp.org](mailto:info@pnhp.org) for general inquiries, or to be put in touch with local staff

## Single Payer Allies

These are national groups that PNHP frequently partners with on single-payer events:

Healthcare NOW!	<a href="http://www.healthcare-now.org">www.healthcare-now.org</a>
Public Citizen	<a href="http://www.citizen.org">www.citizen.org</a>
National Nurses United	<a href="http://www.nationalnursesunited.org">www.nationalnursesunited.org</a>
National Healthcare for the Homeless Council	<a href="http://www.nhchc.org">www.nhchc.org</a>
Progressive Democrats of America	<a href="http://www.pdamerica.org">www.pdamerica.org</a>
American Medical Student Association	<a href="http://www.amsa.org">www.amsa.org</a>
PNHP Local Chapters	<a href="http://www.pnhp.org/stateactions">www.pnhp.org/stateactions</a>
Labor Campaign for Single Payer	<a href="http://www.laborforsinglepayer.org">www.laborforsinglepayer.org</a>

And others!

## PNHP Slideshows & Videos

You can access most slideshows that PNHP members give as presentations from the Annual Meeting and Leadership training, as well as sample grand rounds and special topics on the PNHP website. Members are encouraged to use these slides to develop their own presentations, just make sure to add credits when relevant. The slideshows are password protected, contact [info@pnhp.org](mailto:info@pnhp.org) to get access.

PNHP slideshows are found at [www.pnhp.org/slideshows](http://www.pnhp.org/slideshows).

Check out [PNHP's YouTube channel](#) for recordings of past presentations and grand rounds, workshops, and webinars.