

# ***Physicians for a National Health Program***



*Dinner Program  
November 11, 2023  
PNHP Annual Meeting  
Atlanta, GA*

# Honoring our past. Fighting for our future.

Dear colleague,

It's a pleasure to welcome you to PNHP's Annual Meeting — an always special event that's made *extra special* this year as we celebrate our 35th anniversary. Having been with PNHP for more than 30 years, I've seen plenty of changes in our movement and in our organization, but the one thing that's remained constant has been our values.



This anniversary is a perfect time to reflect on the indomitable spirit of our long-time national coordinator, Dr. Quentin Young, who lived those values each and every day. Quentin represented the best of our profession *and* had an activist's drive to break through barriers and force badly needed change. His simple mantra — *Everybody In! Nobody Out!* — captured what we have been fighting for all these years, and why our fight is so important.

Since our founding, PNHP has made tremendous strides. We have laid out a vision for single-payer reform in the United States, and galvanized tens of thousands of physicians who are fed up with corporate medicine. Our mission now is to make that vision a reality; in order to do that, we'll need to confront the profiteers who dominate U.S. health care. This is no small task, but we've already proven that we can do it. Our successful campaign to remove the AMA from a corporate health care alliance and our recent victory in the fight against ACO REACH have shown that when physicians, students, and patients band together, there's no limit to what we can achieve.

Our work is only possible because of *YOU*. Your support, your energy, and your belief in this cause are critical to our success. Thank you for being here with us today, and every day, in the fight to create the health care system we all need and deserve. Working together, I'm confident we will get it done.

In solidarity,

Claudia M. Fegan, M.D.  
National Coordinator



# 35th Anniversary Celebration Program Schedule

**Dinner** (7:00)

**35th Anniversary Video** (7:45)

**Welcome** by Dr. Philip Verhoef, PNHP President

**Recognizing Past PNHP Presidents**, by Dr. Diljeet Singh, PNHP Vice President

**Recognition of founding and longtime members**, by Dr. Claudia Fegan, PNHP National Coordinator

**Tribute to PNHP Co-Founders Drs. David Himmelstein and Steffie Woolhandler**, by Dr. Gordy Schiff, PNHP Past President

**Celebration of PNHP chapters, donors, and allies**, by Dr. Susan Rogers, PNHP Immediate Past President

**Celebration of SNaHP and other key moments**, by Dr. Richard Bruno, PNHP Board Adviser and SNaHP Founding Member

**Live update from the AMA Interim House of Delegates Meeting** by Donald Bourne, SNaHP Executive Board Member

## **Presentation of Awards**

**Nick Skala Student Activist Award**, presented by Dr. Ashley Duhon, PNHP Board Adviser and former SNaHP Executive Board Member

**Tribute to Dr. Quentin Young**, longtime PNHP National Coordinator, by Dr. Diljeet Singh

**Dr. Quentin Young Health Activist Award**, presented by Dr. Diljeet Singh and Dr. Ashley Duhon

**Special recognition of PNHP Health Policy Fellow Dr. Don McCanne**, presented by Dr. Diljeet Singh

**The Path Forward**—including a review of 2024 goals and our vision for the future, by Dr. Philip Verhoef

**Adjourn** (9:00)



# The History and Accomplishments of PNHP

Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) is an influential voice in the health care debate. From its conception at a summer conference in New Hampshire in 1986 on "Caring for the Poor," where a small group of physicians became convinced that **the health care situation was critical and would worsen without systemic reform**, and its formal incorporation in 1988, to its current membership of more than 25,000 physicians, medical students, health professionals, and community advocates across the country, PNHP has maintained a vision that health care reform is not only necessary, it is *possible*.

PNHP's original proposal for health care reform attracted national media attention when it was published on January 12, 1989, in the prestigious medical journal, the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The proposal for a tax-financed, comprehensive national health program was endorsed by 412 physicians representing virtually every state and medical specialty. In the context of physicians' historic opposition to health care reform, the **publication of a proposal by physicians advocating a national health program** was a major news item, and the publication launched PNHP's high public profile and role in advocacy and education.

PNHP continues to be a leading voice in medical literature for single payer. In 2003, JAMA published PNHP's "Proposal of the Physicians' Working Group for Single-Payer National Health Insurance" with more than 7,000 physician endorsers. In 2016, the *American Journal of Public Health* published an updated proposal, "Beyond the Affordable Care Act: A Physicians' Proposal for Single-Payer Health Care Reform."

Since the publication of the original proposal, PNHP has become a nationally recognized center of expertise on health policy and health care reform, advising leaders from medicine, government, labor unions, business, and consumer groups on their health care positions. PNHP leaders have testified before Congress and briefed U.S. Senators and Representatives. PNHP works closely with other organizations advancing Medicare for All, providing critical data and policy analysis to the coalition.

PNHP members have published a number of **pathbreaking studies and position papers in prominent medical journals**. In 2003, the *New England Journal of Medicine* published Dr. Steffie Woolhandler and Dr. David Himmelstein's landmark research on administrative waste in the U.S. health care system. In 2005, the journal *Health Affairs* published research by Drs. Himmelstein and Woolhandler on the significant role of medical bills in personal bankruptcy, and in 2009 the *American Journal of Public Health* published their research on the mortality effects of uninsurance.





In 1991, PNHP's proposals for financing a national health program and restructuring the delivery of long-term care were published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The JAMA also published PNHP's position paper on quality assurance in health care in 1994. In 2018, the BMJ published PNHP's proposal for pharmaceutical reform. Their research on health care utilization and coverage expansions was published in 2019 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Since the organization's inception, PNHP has played a major role in public education about the flaws in the current health care system and the need for comprehensive reform. Journalists turn to PNHP's research as background for their own investigations, including reporters at *The New York Times* and *Axios*. PNHP members have been featured in the media on programs and networks such as *Good Morning America*, the *PBS Newshour*, *CNN*, *Fox News*, *ABC World News*, *CBS Evening News*, *NPR*, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

With the assistance of Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.), **PNHP introduced legislation in 2003 in the U.S. House of Representatives** to create a single-payer national health insurance program. Its successor legislation, the Medicare for All Act, sponsored by Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) and Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), has the support of over half the Democratic Caucus. Similar legislation was introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who popularized single-payer "Medicare for All" with his presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020.

PNHP's student arm, **Students for a National Health Program (SNaHP), was formed in 2011** and held its first annual SNaHP Summit in 2012. SNaHP leaders have been instrumental in gaining the AMA's Medical Student Section to endorse single payer, and have brought resolutions to the AMA's House of Delegates. SNaHP leaders also work with other medical student organizations on their health care policies, such as the Student National Medical Association and the Latino Student Medical Association.

Over the course of 35 years, PNHP has grown from a handful of concerned physicians to an influential research and advocacy organization representing physicians across the professional spectrum. PNHP members practice medicine in hospitals, clinics, and private practices and work in universities, corporations, and public agencies. Some are young, still in medical school. Some hold the most prestigious positions in American medicine.

**PNHP believes that physicians have an important role to play:** to educate the public and policy makers about the fundamental policy changes required to assure that each American has access to high-quality, affordable health care, and to organize our colleagues to reclaim our profession from the corporations that have come to control our health care system.



# PNHP Officers



**Philip Verhoef, MD, PhD, FAAP, FACP**  
**President** (Critical Care Medicine, Honolulu)

Dr. Verhoef is an adult and pediatric intensivist and Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. While in Chicago, he served as faculty advisor for the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine SNaHP chapter.



**Diljeet K. Singh, MD, DrPH**  
**Vice President** (Gynecologic Oncology, Virginia)

Dr. Diljeet Singh is a women's health advocate and an integrative gynecologic oncologist. She previously served as a national board adviser to PNHP, and as president of the Illinois chapter.



**Claudia M. Fegan, MD, CHCQM, FACP**  
**Treasurer, National Coordinator** (Internal Medicine, Chicago)

Dr. Claudia Fegan is Chief Medical Officer of Cook County Health. She has appeared on national television and radio programs on behalf of PNHP, and has testified before Congress on a wide range of health care issues.



**Ed Weisbart, MD, CPE, FAAFP**  
**Treasurer** (Family Medicine, St. Louis)

Dr. Weisbart practiced family medicine for 20 years at Rush Medical Center in Chicago, before moving to St. Louis in 2003 to serve as chief medical officer of Express Scripts, and as an assistant professor of clinical medicine at Washington University. He retired from Express Scripts in 2010.



**Susan Rogers, MD, FACP**  
**Immediate Past President** (Internal Medicine, Chicago)

Dr. Susan Rogers is recently retired from Stroger Hospital of Cook County, where she was co-director of medical student programs for the Department of Medicine. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Rush University, where she continues to be an active member of the Committee of Admissions.



# PNHP Leadership

## Directors

Robertha Barnes, MD 2023, SNaHP delegate  
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Wayne S. Strouse, MD, FAAFP, North East delegate (NY)  
Brian Yablon, MD, North Central delegate (MN)

## Past Presidents

Garrett Adams, MD, MPH, FAAP; Carolyn Clancy, MD, MACP (temporarily resigned); Andrew D. Coates, MD, FACP; Claudia Fegan, MD, FACP; Oliver Fein, MD; Adam Gaffney, MD, MPH; John Geyman, MD; Robert LeBow, MD (deceased); Ana Malinow, MD, MS, FAAP; Don McCanne, MD; Carol Paris, MD; Glenn Pearson, MD; Deb Richter, MD; Susan Rogers, MD, FACP; Cecile Rose, MD, MPH; Johnathon Ross, MD, MPH; Jeffrey Scavron, MD; Gordon Schiff, MD; Susan Steigerwalt, MD, FACP; Isaac Taylor, MD (deceased); Quentin Young, MD, MACP (deceased); Robert L. Zarr, MD, MPH, FAAP



PNHP is proud to acknowledge our longtime national allies in the fight for health justice (along with our dinner sponsors Be a Hero and the Labor Campaign for Single Payer, featured elsewhere in this program). We are grateful for your tireless advocacy in pursuit of our common goal: Medicare for All!



# Interview with PNHP Co-Founders

Earlier this year, PNHP national board member Jonathan Michels conducted an extensive interview with our co-founders, Drs. Steffie Woolhandler and David Himmelstein, in Jacobin. To read the full interview, please visit [pnhp.org/CoFounderInterview](http://pnhp.org/CoFounderInterview).



**Jonathan Michels:** You cofounded PNHP during the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s. Why did you choose to focus your energy on securing national health insurance at a time when single-payer health care was not really on the table?

**Dr. Steffie Woolhandler:** I was close to the end of my training as a doctor, and it was obvious that the financing of the health care system was interfering with the actual practice of medicine. The financing system was one of the things that was preventing my patients from getting the care they needed, and preventing me from delivering the quality of care I wanted to deliver. So that was really what motivated me.

**Jonathan Michels:** Did any individuals or organizations provide a template for PNHP?

**Dr. David Himmelstein:** We were influenced by the women who were the remains of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, who had formed a group called the Coalition to Fight Infant Mortality. When we were interns and residents at the public hospital in Oakland, we collaborated with them in efforts to improve the maternity services and prenatal care available to the Black community. One lesson from that was understanding that systematic research could be a useful piece of advocacy work. One of our earliest research projects was documenting a large number of people refused care at private hospitals in the Oakland-Berkeley-Alameda County area, who were then sent to the public hospital emergency room, often in grave condition.

**Jonathan Michels:** How did the physician community react to the creation of PNHP?

**Dr. Steffie Woolhandler:** The fact that we were able to garner so many members speaks to other physicians feeling something similar. There were a lot of physicians who wanted to focus on how we could change the financing and delivery so that the





doctors could actually do their jobs and the patients could get the care they needed. That really helped crystalize some of the feelings that people had — that they were being blocked from doing their job.

**Jonathan Michels:** Can you describe the process of drafting and publishing the first physicians' proposal for a national health program, and how that elevated PNHP's status in the media and within the medical community?

**Dr. David Himmelstein:** Having a concrete proposal published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* lent tremendous gravitas to the organization and made it very much mainstream in the physician community. In the meantime, we had developed templates for talks that people could give, which were recognizably similar to the kinds of talks that doctors were used to hearing but took a different tack politically. They had slides presenting data quantitatively and making the case in very systematic, evidence-based ways that doctors were comfortable with.

We'd been reaching out to colleagues in a small way, but the *New England Journal* article really put the organization on the map in a very different way, and also put us on the map in the public media. We were invited onto the major news shows of the time. There were two other proposals published for health reform around the same time, and we were often on with those folks. We were very happy when people started characterizing our view as one representing the doctors and assigning us that role.

★ 35 YEARS

# Congratulations!

Solidarity and congratulations from the Labor Campaign for Single Payer to our PNHP partners in the healthcare justice movement for 35 years of steadfast commitment to ensuring healthcare as a human right.



On behalf of the Labor Campaign for Single Payer, we thank you for your commitment to the labor movement and Medicare for All









# ***PNHP Award Winners***

## **Dr. Quentin Young Health Activist Award**

Henry Abrons, MD, MPH; Pippa Abston, MD, PhD;  
Garrett Adams, MD, MPH; Simon Ahtaridis, MSIII;  
Marcia Angell, MD; Richard Bruno, MD, MPH;  
Aaron Carroll, MD; Andy Coates, MD;  
Rose Ann DeMoro; Claudia Fegan, MD;  
Oliver Fein, MD; Margaret Flowers, MD;  
Elizabeth Frost, MD; John Geyman, MD;  
Kevin Grumbach, MD; David Himmelstein, MD;  
Mike Huntington, MD/Mad As Hell Doctors;  
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Carol Kirschenbaum, MD; Bob LeBow, MD;  
Marvin Malek, MD; Ana Malinow, MD;  
Tony Mazzochi; Don McCanne, MD;  
David McLanahan, MD; Mary O'Brien, MD;  
Ellen Oxfeld, PhD; Carol Paris, MD;  
Linda Peeno, MD; Deb Richter, MD;  
Susan Rogers, MD; David Satcher, MD, PhD;  
Anne Scheetz, MD; Gordy Schiff, MD;  
Jessica Schorr Saxe, MD; Ann Sett gast, MD;  
Eve Shapiro, MD, MPH; Alice Silverman, MD;  
Nick Skala; Donna Smith; Paul Song, MD;  
Paul Sorum, MD, PhD; Chris Stack, MD;  
Rob Stone, MD; Art Sutherland, MD;  
Kay Tillow; Rita Valenti; Todd Varness, MSII;  
Graham Walker, MS1; Ed Weisbart, MD;  
Rocky White, MD; Woody Wilson;  
Steffie Woolhandler, MD, MPH; Robert Zarr, MD

## **Nick Skala Student Activist Award**

Danielle Alexander; Carl Berdahl;  
James Besante; Richard Bruno;  
Ashley Duhon; Joshua Faucher;  
Scott Goldberg; Simeon Kimmel;  
Augie Lindmark; Janine Petito;  
Victoria Powell; Anand Saha;  
Bryant Shuey; Edward Si;  
Vanessa Van Doren;  
Michael Zingman

## **Special Awards**

Arnold Relmand, MD; Mark Almberg







**BE A HERO IS HONORED  
TO JOIN THE CELEBRATION OF  
PHYSICIANS FOR A NATIONAL HEALTH  
PROGRAM'S 35TH ANNIVERSARY.**

We are proud to have such fearless partners  
in the fight for health justice and equity for all.

# Thank you to our generous supporters

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