

Utilizing Social Media as a Single Payer Activist

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA?

Activism is the use of **direct action** to achieve an end, either for or against an issue.

It is not enough to believe an idea. It is not enough to compile data, formulate arguments, and track statistics. **Activism is change through ACTION.**

Activism takes many forms. Common methods of outreach and communication within the Single Payer movement include:

- Tabling and Leafleting
- Lobbying
- Rallies
- Door Knocking
- Persuasive Writing (Op-Ed & Letter to the Editor)
- Persuasive Speaker Events
- Media creation
- Creating membership databases and distributing consistent messaging and updates (Newsletters & Emails)
- Websites
- Social Media Propagation

Since the pandemic began restricting opportunities for in-person community engagement in March of this year, activists have been forced to adapt to social distancing requirements. Many of the above forms of outreach are now difficult or impossible, forcing a transition to reliance upon our online options.

Social Media Propagation, online newsletters and email blasts, and online meetings have become the best options for engagement. The attached coursework will give you an introduction to our current avenues of outreach.

CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the biggest struggles for advocacy groups is DISINFORMATION. Online, all ideas (whether they are or are not based in truth or fact) have equal opportunity to root and spread. Disinformation makes the job of the activist even more difficult. In addition to educating, they now are also responsible for exposing misinformation, clarifying fact, and continually reinforcing truth versus fiction.

Even more frustrating is the commitment of current culture to distrust and OPPOSE EXPERTS. Cynicism of intellectual authorities is a concept that has deep roots in American culture but has also been proliferated in recent years. READ: <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2018/0827/Who-made-you-an-expert-Is-America-s-distrust-of-elites-becoming-more-toxic>

Blogging

Activism for any cause is futile without practical and purposeful action.

This seems obvious, but it is important enough to take a moment and seriously ponder as a concept. (Go ahead, I'll wait.)

I think that we can agree that an idea stuck in someone's head doesn't further a cause. Do you want to be someone THINKING about change or MAKING change?

Blogging (Take Two)

The above text is an example of the conversational voice allowed and encouraged within social media. This is what makes social media (and blogging specifically) a truly engaging and accessible way to communicate effectively with a wide audience.

The following article is concise and an excellent example of utilizing conversational voice to educate and engage: <https://clearsightbooks.com/how-to-write-conversational-tone-why/>

A fantastic example of an educational blog with a conversational voice and simple, accessible format can be found at <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/> This blog, titled Letters from an American, is a daily read for thousands of Americans. The author, Heather Cox Richardson, is an American historian and Professor of History at Boston College. Her blog uses American history (her expertise) to deconstruct current events and trends in American politics. A political science exegetical assessment of twitter, American media, and current events does not on the surface seem to be something enjoyable, but she achieves it on an almost daily basis. Her engaging blog educates and enlightens through her easy-going narrative style and her extensive knowledge.

Summer Activism Project: CREATE A BLOG

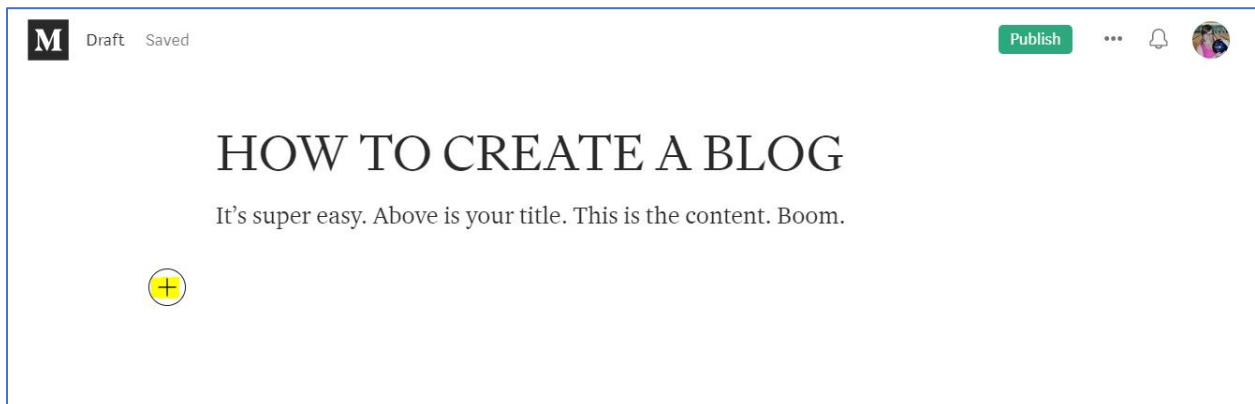
We will be encouraging each intern create and maintain a blog during our 8-week internship. This is a tool to help track articles and commentaries, show growth in understanding of ideas and concepts, and begin to develop the voice and character of your online identity.

Medium.com offers free, easy blogging. Follow these steps to begin your Social Media assignment:

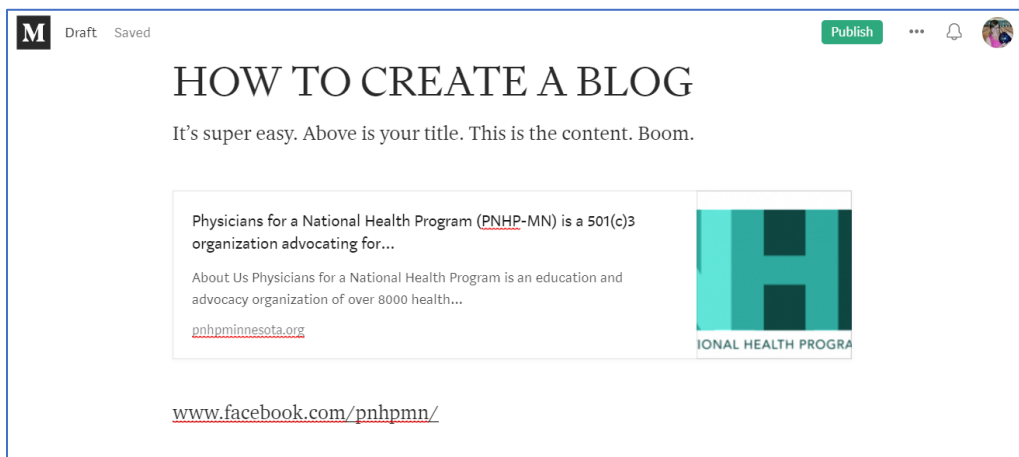
- 1.) Go to medium.com and click “Get Started” in the upper right-hand corner of the screen
- 2.) Set up a new account
- 3.) Once created, click on your icon at the top-right and choose “Write a Story”
- 4.) Complete your weekly prompt by writing a piece
- 5.) Click “Publish” to go to the Preview page
- 6.) On the Preview page, choose 5 tags to help recover your articles, thoughts, and insights for future use. (E.g. Medicare For All, Rural Healthcare, Health Care Reform...or create your own!)

TIPS for MEDIUM.COM:

*After adding your title, click Enter. It will automatically create the body of your blog. Begin typing your content. Click Enter to start a new paragraph or get a prompt (the plus sign) to add a link, photo, video, or visual break.



*Want to reference an article or website? Just type in or paste the URL into the body of the blog, and then click Enter. If there is a preview attached to the URL, it will automatically embed into the body of the blog. If there is not a preview available, it will read as a plain URL address. (Example below)



BLOG PROMPTS:

WEEK 1: Consider the concept of conversational voice in the context of the CS Monitor article on page 1. How will the style with which you communicate effect your potency in the Single Payer Health Care Movement?

WEEK 2: This week, you will be meeting with David Dvorak. Read his December 2015 article <http://pnhp.org/news/single-payer-momentum-builds-with-pnhp/> and discuss if and/or how you personally saw his concerns come to fruition with the 2020 pandemic.

WEEK 3: This week, you will be meeting with Senator John Marty. Read excerpts from his book Healing Health Care and discuss the impact a state-wide single payer plan could have on Minnesota's economy. Discuss how it would change your trajectory as a doctor learning and working in Minnesota. Visit <http://mnhealthplan.org/excerpts-from-healing-health-care/>

WEEK 4: This week, you will be meeting with Representative Alice Mann. As a physician with a master's in public health, an immigrant from Brazil, and a legislator, her perspective on American health care is incredibly valuable. How did meeting Representative Mann impact your view of being a health care activist in relation to your duty to the community. (Bio on Rep Mann can be found at <https://alumniassociation.mayo.edu/featured-alumni/alice-mann-m-d/>)

Week 5: Find a current news article highlighting Single Payer Health Care as a remedy for our current pandemic crisis. Create a commentary based upon the article and your experience.

WEEK 6: This week, you will be discussing Minnesota rural health care with Dr. Kip Sullivan and Anne Jones, RN. Visit <https://pnhp.org/kitchen-table-campaign-rural-health-care/> and explore the Took Kit provided by PNHP. Considering the materials provided, create a social media strategy to educate and expand the Single Payer base.

WEEK 7: Racial disparities in health care have been accentuated by COVID-19. Watch the following video by Healthcare—NOW to learn more about role of racism and Jim Crow played in defeating previous single-payer legislation. <https://youtu.be/eN0KhJ3BoI> Watch Dr. Susan Rogers' 2 minute video on racial inequity in health care at <https://youtu.be/jshHAEM59B0> . These videos are examples of online tools for dissemination of information. Discuss the features of the videos (style, length, voices, word choices, etc) and the pros and cons of their effectiveness.

WEEK 8: Discuss the ways in which your views on the American Health Care System have evolved during your internship. How will this influence your journey as an activist?