

Use the “Spectrum of Allies” Model for Strategizing How to Create a Nationwide System of Universal Single-Payer Health Care

Let’s use newsprint to describe this idea: **In most struggles for bold social or political change**, some people want the bold reform and other people do not. Let’s draw a line whose left-hand point shows people who **strongly** want to keep the **status quo**, and a right-hand point for those who **strongly** want the **bold reform**.

DO THIS: *On newsprint let’s mark these two end-points and draw a line between them, showing a spectrum.*

In practice, **most individuals** in the population are on a spectrum **somewhere between these two end-points**. Likewise **specific groups of people** – most constituencies – most power-wielding organizations – tend to be at **various places along the spectrum**.

DO THIS: *We can draw a half-moon or half of a pie with wedges to illustrate these segments of the population holding various positions regarding **Universal Single-Payer Health Care**, ranging from “STRONGLY WANT THE STATUS QUO WITHOUT SINGLE-PAYER” to “UNDECIDED” to “STRONGLY WANT UNIVERSAL SINGLE-PAYER,” with various gradations in between. **In recent years more people have been moving into the wedge showing how many people WANT Universal Single-Payer.***

- Which kinds of people most strongly want to PREVENT Universal Single-Payer? Which social groups or political groups or other constituencies? *We can write them near those pie wedge segments.*
- Which kinds of people most strongly want to CREATE Universal Single-Payer? Which social groups or political groups or other constituencies? *We can write them near those pie wedge segments.*

To develop workable strategies to establish a nationwide system for Universal Single-Payer (USP), we do **not** need to convert people at the opposite end of the spectrum to our end. Rather, we can simply move enough people from each segment **one segment toward** our end of the spectrum. **Therefore we should figure out:**

- How to weaken the insistence of strong opponents of USP, so those persons will do less to oppose it.
- How to turn mild opponents of USP into becoming undecided, or who at least will not oppose our efforts to create it.
- How to turn people who are undecided into people who will support USP.
- How to turn people who support USP into people who will work actively to create USP.

Are we clear about our task? We do not need to convert our strongest adversaries all the way to our side. Just devise strategies to move the people in each segment one segment toward our direction. Altogether, this will shift the weight toward creating Universal Single-Payer health care.

Likewise, we should not be fixated on the people who hold official political power (legislators, governors, judges, etc.). We can strategize how to move enough people so public opinion will shift toward our direction. (Sometimes I wear a button saying, “If the people lead, eventually the leaders will follow.”)

Let’s generate some strategies that might move people in each segment one step toward our direction:

- (1) Persons and entities that **strongly OPPOSE** Universal Single-Payer
- (2) Persons and entities that **somewhat oppose** Universal Single-Payer
- (3) Persons and entities that **are neutral or undecided or have mixed feelings** about Universal Single-Payer
- (4) Persons and entities that **somewhat support** Universal Single-Payer
- (5) Persons and entities that **strongly SUPPORT** Universal Single-Payer but are not doing much about it:
How can we motivate, organize, and activate them – and sustain their efforts until we win?

This tool is also in Martin Oppenheimer and George Lakey’s book, *A Manual for Direct Action*, Quadrangle Books, 1965

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