

Good afternoon, and thank you for this opportunity. My name is Corey Kirkland. I am a mother, a healthcare worker, and a union member of 1199SEIU. I work at Strong Memorial Hospital and I have very good health care coverage because we, the employees at Strong, through the strength of our union, have fought to win these benefits. But this is not the norm in our society.

Today, I would like to speak about the important role that health insurance has played in my life. As I mentioned earlier, I am a mother of four boys and having health insurance provided me with the necessary prenatal care. My first two pregnancies were high risk and there were plenty of labs and routine screenings such ultrasounds, fetal monitoring and amniocentesis. **For me not having to worry about how I was going to pay for the care helped with the burden of worry and the stress of caring for my unborn child.**

My second oldest is a child with special needs. Without health insurance I would not be able to afford his care. He is on a whole host of medications and sometimes requires inpatient treatment for weeks at a time. His outpatient treatment was another component of his care along with the different wrap around services. I am so thankful for my healthcare because I am able to still work and my child received the necessary outpatient treatment due to our health insurance.

Health insurance has provided my children with the necessary pediatric care. The health insurance has provided my children with routine well child visits, immunization and flu shots. With boys there are countless stories of injuries where they would need to be seen in the emergency room. My youngest child fell and had to be seen in the emergency room for stitches and having insurance assured me that I would not be buried in debt to pay for the visit because my copay was affordable.

My story is universal like our health insurance should be.

I believe that quality healthcare coverage is a human right. Your level of income, or if you are lucky enough to work for a union employer, should not be what determines if you are able to have a healthy pregnancy or take care of a child with special needs. It is time to fix our broken healthcare system and make sure that all people get the care that they need. That is why I support the New York Health Act.