

Testimony of Tamara Schuppin
May 28, 2019 Hearing on the New York Health Act, Panel #14

Thank you, Legislators, for the opportunity to speak before you.

I'm **Tamara Schuppin**, retired resident of Saugerties NY, and a volunteer for the Campaign for New York Health. I'm a lifelong student of natural health, a former health food store owner and the founder of the Home Health League, a study group dedicated to learning ways to stay healthy.

I was tentatively diagnosed with COPD (**Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder**) during the winter of 2002-3, but my worst symptoms happened two winters ago. From August to March I was exhausted and in pain from constant coughing. My heart raced to get enough oxygen to my body because of my diminished lung function. I lost weight like many people with COPD who spend so much energy trying to force their inflamed lungs to work that they use 25% more calories than healthy people. I don't recommend it as a way to lose weight!

I have a medical sharing plan that kept me in compliance with the Affordable Care Act, but its **\$10,500 annual deductible** makes it almost useless. After spending that on the tests I would need to confirm I had COPD, including a lung biopsy, I might have then qualified for coverage for an expensive prescription drug, but only until a new coverage year began. I wished I didn't have to spend money on premiums that gave me nothing. I would have rather used that money on acupuncture and massage therapy to relieve the pain in my back, neck and head from coughing.

My husband and I agonized whether to use up our savings on my condition, risking driving us into poverty and dependence on subsidized housing. Like many Americans, we try to save a little each month for emergencies but are lucky if we don't go into the red instead. We have both worked hard in our lives, though we don't have a lot of assets to show for it. Does that mean we deserve to be reduced to poverty because of the high cost of a profit driven healthcare system? I think **the more appropriate question is "Will you, our lawmakers, deny the for profit lobbyists and make comprehensive healthcare available for everyone?"**

At the moment I am doing well with my symptoms, but I ask myself: will I get sick again and how will I afford the care I may need? Under the NY Health Act, my ability to pay will factor into my cost for care, and I won't have to make such difficult financial decisions. Please remember my story when you make your decision about the NY Health Act.

I request one change in the NYHA. In the interest of addressing the limitations of conventional medicine, I ask that **spots be made available on the Board of Trustees and the Regional Advisory Councils for practitioners of alternative medicine such as acupuncturists, and for consumers like myself who wish to avoid drugs and surgery whenever possible.**

Thank you for your time. Let's get health care right in NYS starting with passing the NYHA.