

Testimony for New York Health Act
Public Hearing on May 28, 2019

My name is Brian Managan and I'm from Rochester New York.

I'm a retiree from Monroe Community College, with health insurance coverage provided by the college under the terms of the faculty contract. Since my retirement, the college administration has pursued a hostile agenda against the faculty and CSEA unions and has been attacking the terms of our contracts, and specifically the provisions of our duly negotiated retiree health care.

It is clear that the administration wishes to back out of it's commitments, much like many corporations are doing, and leave me, my wife and my fellow union members with substandard coverage that threatens not only my health care in my retirement years, but exposes me to potential bankruptcy resulting from unplanned expenses. Why should we even depend on unions to fight for our right to comprehensive care? Meaningful coverage should not be a luxury, or an "added benefit" that unionized workers should have to bargain for and that employers can just try to back out of to boost their own profits. Instead, comprehensive coverage should be a given, whether you are unionized or not.

My experience is not unique. Businesses and institutions focused on profits see their employees as resources only as long as they do not become liabilities. At that point, many attempt to change, evade, or cancel the terms of agreements, putting citizens of New York into desperate situations. This is not only immoral, but should be illegal.

My wife, who is here with me, was a nurse for over 40 years and she witnessed a similar vein of immorality while working in care management. Her last assignment required documenting the medical needs of patients and providing information to insurance companies so that the insurance companies could determine what treatments, procedures, and services they would cover under that person's plan. All too often, she would have to advise patients that they would be responsible for uncovered charges, that they could not get tests or procedures the doctors deemed necessary, and would be saddled with devastating bills, because the insurance company decided not to cover them. Doctors would frequently "go to bat" for the patients in a time-consuming battle to get patients the care they need, but would lose the case far too often to an insurance company doctor who has never seen the patient. Profit over care. This too, is immoral. The only people that should have a say in what medical services are covered and needed are the doctors and their patients; insurance companies have no right to be the ultimate decision maker on people's medical care. Why do we let them do this to our citizens of New York. This is corrupt!

The moral and civilized solution to these and countless other scenarios in our broken health care system, is to establish a uniform, comprehensive program available equally to all citizens of New York, that is not controlled by the profit-taking insurance companies who add nothing to the system beyond delays and denials. The New York Health Act establishes a model by which a civilized society can be measured. We in New York care for ALL people.

Thank you for your time.