

**NYC**  
**HEALTH+**  
**HOSPITALS**

**New York State Hearing**

**New York Health Act**

**Joint Senate and Assembly Committees on Health**

**Mitchell Katz, M.D.**

**President and Chief Executive Officer**

**New York City Health + Hospitals**

**October 23, 2019**

bureaucracy and administrative burdens. This money really should be going to care for patients.

I'm going to give you a few examples of how a single payer system would let us take better care of our patients. In the case of Health and Hospitals we have to negotiate separately with each insurance company and arrange to follow their rules on prior authorization procedures and send in information on their forms. Even when we do everything right, the insurance company sometimes refuse to pay us for services provided. We are currently in mediation with a for-profit insurance company that says a three year-old boy brought to one of our emergency rooms with a fever of 103 and who was unresponsive should have been treated as an outpatient. No responsible doctor would have sent the child home. However, because of the rules that govern how payments are made, the insurance company can simply just not pay us, even when we were providing the best possible care to the child.

The New York Health Act is necessary because even many insured people cannot get the full range of care they need. Recently, in my clinic I took care of a senior who had emphysema who went to the emergency room and was seen, however the co-pay was \$60 for an inhaler. That kept him from getting the care he needed for his shortness of breath.

The current system leads to doctors like me to have to focus on insurance formularies rather than on keeping our patients healthy. I recently saw a new patient