

STATE WIDE

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc
Improving The Lives of Senior Citizens & Families in NY State

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Testimony of Lowell Green

Member, Board of Directors

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.

To the Joint Committees on Health

Public Hearing

on The New York Health Care Act

to create state single payer health coverage

**Bronx Library Center
310 E Kingsbridge Road
Bronx, NY**

Wednesday, October 23, 2019

Good Morning. My name is Lowell Green. I am a Member of the Board of Directors of NY StateWide Senior Action Council and a resident of the Bronx.

I have Medicare and Emblem Health health insurance. I am speaking about facility user fee. As a Bronx resident, I got a referral to see a specialist at Monterfee hospital. The doctor is on the staff, has an office in the hospital's main building and see's patients two days a week. I saw the doctor and paid my medical plan's co-pay amount. Medicare paid their amount. I then received a bill from the hospital for a past due charge for a facility user free. No one could explain why I was charged. I called New York StateWide Senior Action Council 1-800-333-4374 and learned this is a new fee that hospitals are charging people for using their facility. There is a payment rate structure from 1 to 5 depending on services given. **As a senior, I watch where I spend my money. This fee was something I was not expecting and did not get any reimbursement for. Why does a hospital charge fees and then not tell anyone about them?**

Seniors like me are continuing to find hidden costs to obtain health care such as: facilities fees. These are costs that hospitals and healthcare practices are charging patients for the use of their offices and equipment because Medicare will not reimburse these costs. The worst part is that nobody explains these costs in advance so they come as a total surprise. We are living on fixed incomes. In New York State 59% of persons over the age of 65 are economically unstable - they can't make ends meet. In boroughs like the Bronx, these figures come up as high as 78%. Sadly, elderly women and persons of color may have insurance, but are not able to pay extra expenses due to the skyrocketing costs of prescription drugs, deductibles, co-payments, and the general cost of living. I urge the legislators to pass the NY Health Act so that older seniors in New York State will be able to afford their healthcare and live a dignified life.