

Diana Lopez Martinez

November 7, 2019

Community Organizer

Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson

13 Grand St

Dear Representatives,

My name is Diana Lopez Martinez, I'm a community organizer for NLMH, a member led grassroots organization with thousands of members across Ulster, Dutchess, and Orange Counties. I've been a resident of Kingston for 23 years. I'm the mom of 3 children ages 10, 7, and 4 who were born and are being raised in Kingston.

I want to start by saying that healthcare is not a privilege it is a right!!!

Several times I've had to choose whether to go to the hospital or not, because I didn't have insurance, and couldn't afford it. 8 years ago, I only had pneumonia, and I left the hospital with a \$12,000 bill I couldn't pay. 6 years ago, I had a sharp pain in my back and abdominal. I wanted to relieve it with homemade remedies so I didn't have to go to the hospital, because I already knew that I couldn't afford it. Since it did not go away for days. I made the decision to go to the hospital and as I arrived they checked me in, and after doing x-rays, ultrasound, blood work they finally decided to do a cat's scan and found that I had gallstone in my bladder. But because I did not have health insurance they could not do surgery. So, they sent me home with strong pain medication that I ended up paying 150 dollars for. I didn't have the money, so I had to ask a family member to let me borrow it. Also because of the pain I could not even go to work so I had to call out - reducing my paycheck and terrified I'd lose my job.

My oldest daughter has had insurance since she was born, but it's still not enough. When she was 6 years old she fainted at home and was taken to the emergency room and we thought that everything was being covered. About 3 months ago, I got served with a summons to pay about 2,000 dollars from that visit. Even though she had insurance. And when we tried to ask why, they just said that the insurance had not covered several things. We tried to appeal it, but that was not successful, and had no choice but to make a deal with then to pay 1,500 dollars.

1,500 dollars may not seem like a lot to you, but to us it is. This is money taken from me that I need to put food on the table for my children.

Healthcare was unaffordable for my children and I when I didn't have insurance, and it's still unaffordable for us now that we do. I ask that you support the The New York Health Act, A.5248/S.3577.

Sincerely