

Hi. My name is Claude Copeland, a staff member of Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition. I am reading this on behalf of Lourdes Balthazar since I was working with her to testify today and still want to share her story since she's not able to herself. She's a NYCHA resident here in the Belmont area of the Bronx. Also, she's a member of the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition and is in favor of the NY Health Act. She feels there needs to be an Equality of Care so folks won't have to struggle with their insurance like she had when she had to request for a Home Health Aide. She had to downgrade her Medicaid insurance from an HMO to the basic plan since the HMO would only provide her with a Home Health Aide 15 hours a week while the basic has allowed for me to get a Home Health Aide for more than 50 hours a week. As a person with diagnosed Sickle Cell, Asthma and Kidney tumors, she needs this level of support in her day to day. Also, what made this process even more challenging for her is when she had to switch, she went without a Home Health Aide for almost 6 months. The reason for this was that she needed to wait for court dates to see a Judge then speak with multiple insurance reps, her Primary Care Physician, the City rep for medicaid, a psychiatrist, a therapist, then wait for the court's decision and more. Why did she have to do all this when her Primary Care Physician was the one that recommended she needed to have a Home Health Aide for longer hours during the week? Now, due to her downgrading her insurance, she needs to be pre-authorized for my prescriptions, which delays her access to medications. She has been denied orthopedic physical therapy that was recommended by her Primary Care Physician but isn't covered under her current plan. She has even had to turn off her phone service to cover her own prescriptions since there have been times when they weren't covered by her current insurance. This is not right! All New Yorkers should have the coverage they need to live a healthy life. Thank you.