

City of Rochester, NY
Rochester City Council

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Statement in Support of New York Health Act

I ran for City Council two years ago because I had spent the previous eight years at the local food bank, where the health disparities in our community became clear to me. I served people who had to make decisions about whether to pay for healthcare or put food on their table. I saw what many people started to report nationally: zip code is a bigger predictor of health than genetic code. Indeed, I live in one of the poorest zip codes in Rochester, 14608, where life expectancy is nearly a decade lower than in the most affluent parts of our region. That inspired me to run for City Council in an effort to build a healthier Rochester, where people had an opportunity to live a healthy life regardless of neighborhood.

Though I've worked on a number of initiatives since being elected, I know that the best, most comprehensive way to level the playing field and reduce these health disparities is by ensuring that everyone has access to quality healthcare, regardless of how much money they earn. The New York Health Act will ensure that everyone has quality coverage. It is the right thing to do morally and ethically.

But it is also a practical decision. Countless studies bear this out. People who are healthier are better able to work and be engaged community members. Children who are healthier are better able to learn. Retirees who are healthier have energy to volunteer. People who are healthy are better able to sustain housing and contribute to their community. They are better able to care for their family members and neighbors.

I will continue to work on critical health issues as a member of City Council, but I can confidently say that the most impactful thing to improve my constituents' health is to pass NYHA and ensure that everyone has access to quality healthcare.



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