

I write as one of many union members who are in anguished opposition to the proposed shift from Medicare to Medicare Advantage, And I appeal to you to help us head off the change being pushed through so quickly.

I am horrified at the prospect of losing my excellent Medicare health coverage now in advanced old age, and forced into the far inferior Medicare Advantage plan, which will NOT EVEN SAVE THE CITY MONEY! The answer to gaining more control over health care costs is NOT to rob retirees like me of what was promised to them and what they worked hard for decades to receive. And it is NOT to pit us retired elders against young active employees—but to follow our union, PSC's excellent suggestions for finding other ways of reducing costs, by going to the sources of the expense, the huge hospital costs, the outrageous profits from prescription drug prices.

Medicare Advantage will make it hard, if not impossible, to see the doctors I have counted on for many years and have confidence in. It will put budget-minded business-oriented people in charge of telling me if I need this medical procedure or not—instead of my excellent trusted doctors, one of the great prides of New York City, along with its great hospitals. But certain hospitals will not accept MA payments, or may not down the road, and as someone who not long ago had breast cancer surgery at Sloan Kettering, I would be very upset not to have access to that resource if I had a recurrence. And once again, besides taking so much away from all of us, a switch to MA will NOT bring the city the savings it anticipates.

So I am hoping you will use your strong voice and all your power to urge support of the PSC's suggestion to set up a short-term fund for the next three years, to allow time to make real structural long-term changes in health care savings—and that you will help convene all involved (the Adams administration, the Council Speaker, MLC) to work out a better way. And please have mercy on us, now very old and vulnerable. Most appalling of all is the threat to even deprive us of the option of paying for Senior Care as a way (a very expensive way) of holding on to our old good benefits. We who fiercely oppose the move into Medicare Advantage should at least be given the opportunity to continue with Senior Care if we pay extra for it. But that's a desperate measure that should not be necessary. Medicare is an excellent system. Please do not allow it to be privatized and diminished in the name of some quick unthinking results just to do something—and thereby betraying a promise made to us who dedicated our work lives over many decades to the public service of passionately and arduously educating NYC's college young people. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Barbara Quart
PSC CUNY Retirees