

PROPOSED HEALTH CARE PLAN CHANGES
CITY COUNCIL HEARING JANUARY 9, 2023

Good Morning. Thank you Speaker Adams, Chairperson De La Rosa, and members of the Civil Service and Labor Committee for holding this meeting to hear testimony on the proposed change to the Administrative Code, 12-126.

My name is Barbara A. Backer RN. I am a registered professional nurse, have worked in Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital both as a clinical nurse specialist and administrator, and retired from Lehman College, CUNY as Professor of Nursing Emerita. I have practiced in NYC most of my professional life. I am a voting constituent in Council District 2, and follow events in neighboring Districts 1 and 3.

I speak in opposition to the proposed Administrative Code changes that would clear the path for the city to implement a Medicare Advantage plan for city employees or charge monthly premiums of roughly \$200.00/month to retirees who opt to remain in the current Senior Care plan. This proposal is contrary to what the city promised us upon our retirement and effectively leaves those of us who do not choose the Medicare Advantage plan and cannot afford \$200.00 per month without health insurance when we are at a time in our lives when we are most vulnerable to health challenges. Just think COVID

In addition, for many of us our current trusted health care practitioners and specialists who have provided both preventive and life-saving care for us over many years and accepted payment from our current city health care plan may indeed not accept payment from a Medicare Advantage plan. Those of you, or a friend or family member, who has received mental health care, or undergone open heart surgery, know how important it is to build and have a trusting relationship with your practitioner. This does not happen overnight nor can it happen with frequent change of providers or denial of specific referrals.

We can not move people similar to the movement of packages in an Amazon warehouse, moving them along from one distribution center where the distributors don't accept packages requiring a certain postage and delivery time and to another center where the delivery time is not so fast but eventually happens, although the packages may have experienced some damages because of the delay. Unfortunately no one at that center knows what to do about that.

We can do better than this.

PSC CUNY has presented a proposal that "boils down to a few key steps that the Adams administration and the City Council can take: (a) Redirect funds the City holds in reserve to keep the MLC Stabilization Fund solvent for three years, (b) Create a stakeholders commission charged with finding a path to control health care spending, with hospital pricing as a priority, and (c) Develop a sustainable mechanism for funding City health insurance." Please Vote NO on the Administrative Code change and urge the Mayor to go back to the bargaining table and find a better solution!

