

**Testimony by Bill Friedheim
NYC Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor
January 9, 2023**

My name is Bill Friedheim. For nine years, I chaired the 3,000-member retiree chapter of the Professional Staff Congress. Twenty months ago, PSC retirees began mobilizing against a move that would threaten our traditional Medicare and push us into a privatized Medicare Advantage plan with onerous pre-authorizations and a limited list of healthcare providers and hospitals – restrictions that literally put colleagues with life-threatening conditions in peril.

THIS IS INSANITY!

THIS IS INSANITY when NYC amid pandemic targets its most vulnerable workforce sector – its retirees -- for healthcare cutbacks.

THIS IS INSANITY when NYC threatens to become the largest public entity in the U.S. moving its retired workforce from traditional Medicare into privatized, for-profit medical care, setting an ugly precedent.

THIS IS INSANITY when NYC breaks a 55-year covenant with its workforce that guaranteed retirees full Medicare coverage, with the City picking up the 20% of costs that Medicare doesn't pay.

THIS IS INSANITY when an arbitrator, with no legal standing with the City Council, mandates that the Council by the end of the month amend 12-126 of the NYC administrative code – an amendment that opens the door for higher premiums for both current municipal employees and retirees, with no end in sight.

THIS IS INSANITY when an arbitrator tells you that if the Council does not amend 12-126, NYC must deny 250,000 municipal retirees and their spouses all choice, moving them willy-nilly from traditional Medicare to Medicare Advantage.

The arbitrator's hubris notwithstanding, THE CITY COUNCIL HAS AGENCY IN THIS MATTER.

Vote "NO!"

And as outlined by PSC representatives in earlier testimony, change the narrative by promoting a different, more constructive path to resolving the City's crisis of escalating healthcare costs.

END THE INSANITY!