NYSNA NURSES FOR HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

Official Newsletter of NYSNA's Single Payer Healthcare Committee

New Year, Same Fight to Guarantee Healthcare for ALL New Yorkers.

After resolving to fight for Single Payer Universal Healthcare at our 2022 Convention, and supporting the re-launch of the Campaign for New York Health in 2023, NYSNA nurses are ready to fight for its passage in 2024 to guarantee quality healthcare for ALL New Yorkers.

The Single Payer Healthcare Committee invites you to read the second issue of our newsletter to keep you updated on the latest news and inform you how to get involved in advocating for universal healthcare.

CEO's Get Paid While Patients Suffer: Our Current System is Broken

BY JOHN BATSON, RN

According to local reports, five CEO's of local hospitals in Western New York earn salaries collectively totaling over $6 million in compensation and benefits annually. Five executives of local health insurance companies in Western New York earn similar compensation packages totaling more than $5 million annually. Executives who lead some of the largest healthcare and health insurance organizations are amassing great personal wealth while everyday New Yorkers are facing life and death medical decisions.

If they have so much to pay themselves why are costs for patients only increasing? Hospital executives state some of

the most significant factors increasing the cost of healthcare is low insurance reimbursement, chronic disease prevalence and rising drug costs. Insurance companies also claim rising drug cost are due to inflation and regulatory factors. All the while our local, state, and federal government officials encourage us to trust our current healthcare system. When these power brokers take their seats at the table to discuss healthcare cost, access, and services the most important partner is missing from the conversation: The patient. They should be the focus of our collective efforts.

The current system is broken. The best solution is a single payer health insurance model. While health industry leaders point fingers at opposing sides, people are needlessly burdened, suffering and unfortunately dying as a result. They are more interested in protecting profits than people. Unfortunately, the public will need to brace for more troubling times. Patients are navigating more frequent insurance denials because health insurance corporations have now leveraged artificial intelligence algorithms to review claims. According to published reports some of the AI software can review as many as 50 claims in 10 seconds. These denials aren't reserved for the most expensive procedures. Unsurprisingly, some insurers have denied up to 49% of claims for even the most basic health needs such as maintenance medications and testing procedures.

Several months ago, my 7-year-old daughter was exhibiting respiratory cold symptoms. Like any other parent I kept her home from school and called her pediatrician. It was recommended she come in for an assessment since strep throat was prevalent in our area. Thankfully, her result was negative, and she recovered quickly. A few weeks later I received $75 bill for uncovered laboratory services. The notice stated her strep culture didn't receive prior authorization. I was livid and couldn't understand why my claim was denied. I immediately submitted an appeal which was approved after 2-3 weeks of waiting. I can only empathize for the people who are denied for expensive or life-threatening medical needs. A single payer health insurance model is the best option to provide comprehensive healthcare. **The current methods of healthcare delivery simply doesn't put the patient first.**

Single Payer Healthcare: Myths vs. Facts 2

BY BILL SCHNEIDER, RN

In our first newsletter, I wrote about the misinformation that persists about a single payer healthcare system despite the fact that implementing it in the United States would result in overall savings. Let's continue to debunk myths about a single-payer healthcare system so we can educate the public and our colleagues and encourage them to become healthcare advocates.

Together, we can create a New York where healthcare as a human right.

Single Payer Healthcare: Myths vs. Facts 2

MYTH: You have "choice" in the American healthcare "free-market" system.

FACT: **You have the illusion of choice in our current system.** Let us pretend that health insurance is like a restaurant. For the most of us with private insurance, our employers pay a majority of the costs so they get to choose which "restaurants" we can go to (think "in or out of network") and what is available on the "menu" (what services, tests, or treatments are paid for; our co-pays costs, etc). However, employers are mainly concerned with the cost of restaurant (insurance), not where we can eat or what's on the menu! Making things worse is the fact that insurance companies don't really care if we as patients like the restaurant choices, or the menu available because WE really aren't their customer, the employers is! The current system is one where most Americans don't control how our healthcare dollars are spent. Getting different healthcare "menus" and "restaurant" choices dictated to us by our employers isn't really a "choice" or a "free-market."

MYTH: A "free-market" is the most efficient way to deliver and pay for care.

FACT: **Single-payer healthcare reform could save up to $200 billion annually in the US if** insurance overhead was brought down to the same level as Medicare or other single-payer systems like Canada. Hospitals and providers would also benefit if our complex and multi-payer system was simplified. For example, the Cleveland Clinic has over 210 MILLION different prices for different insurers. How is this efficient? The free-market also allows insurance companies to develop terrible "Medicare Advantage" programs (which aren't any kind of advantage). These programs are highly profitable for Insurance companies by limiting provider choice and services, striving to "cherry pick" healthy patients, and "lemon drop" the sickest patients out of their programs. These incentives force traditional Medicare to act as a "high risk pool" for private insurance companies so they can maximize private profit and force the cost of the sickest patients back onto taxpayers. **Our current system is in no way efficient!**

Estimating the Cost-Saving Benefits of the New York Health Act

BY JUDY GONZALEZ, RN

It is estimated that the New York Health Act would generate 17.2 billion dollars in savings in New York while:
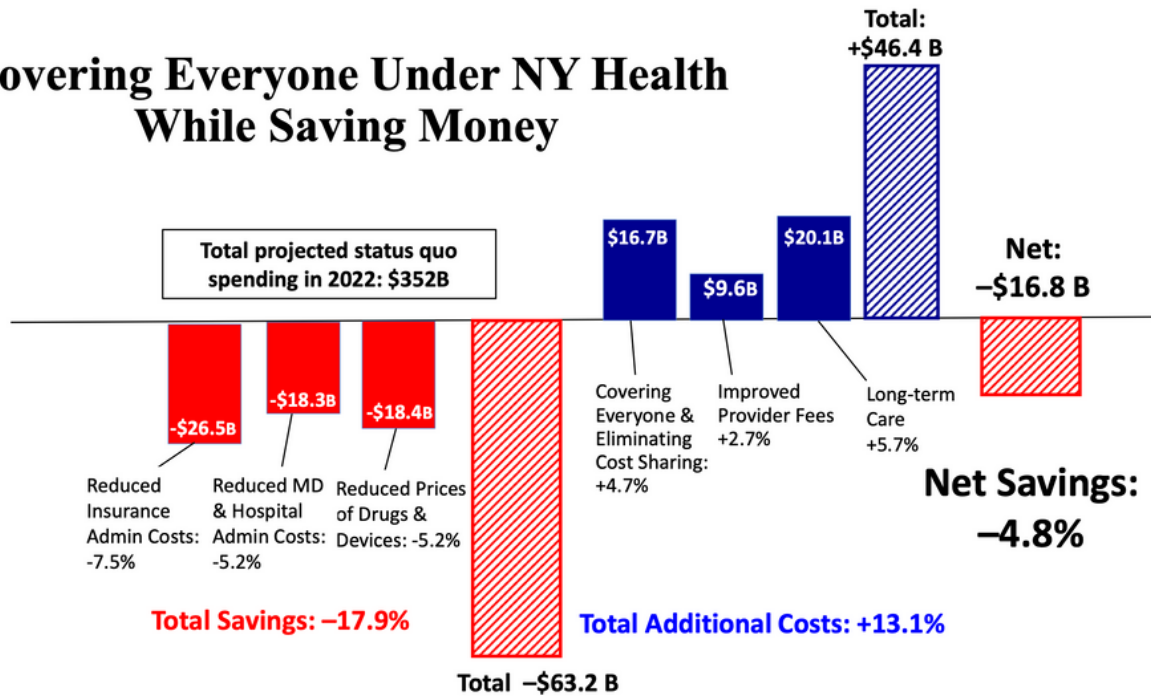
- Covering every New Yorker regardless of employment, marital, or immigration status, zip code or age.
- Covering dental, eye, long term care, and mental healthcare for everyone.
- Ensuring NO additional out-of-pocket costs.
- Creating a level playing field of care and cost for each service.

The tax rate, income-based, would already be reduced by about half as Medicare deductions and Medicaid-generated taxes would be transferred into the rate. See the graph below for more.

Covering Everyone Under NY Health While Saving Money

Total projected status quo spending in 2022: $352B

Total: +$46.4 B

$16.7B

$9.6B

$20.1B

Net: −$16.8 B

−$26.5B

−$18.3B

−$18.4B

Reduced Insurance Admin Costs: -7.5%

Reduced MD & Hospital Admin Costs: -5.2%

Reduced Prices of Drugs & Devices: -5.2%

Covering Everyone & Eliminating Cost Sharing: +4.7%

Improved Provider Fees +2.7%

Long-term Care +5.7%

Net Savings: −4.8%

Total Savings: −17.9%

Total Additional Costs: +13.1%

Total −$63.2 B

Sources: Jodi Liu, et al., An Assessment of the NY Health Act, RAND Corporation, August 2018
Leonard Rodberg, Updated Analysis of the Economics of the NY Health Act, November 2021

Building a Winning Coalition to Pass The New York Health Act BY MARVA WADE, RN

A little more than 30 years ago, NYSNA leadership was among a small group of activists putting forward the idea that health care for all New Yorkers should become part of our state lawmakers' agenda. Assemblyman Richard Gottfried heard their proposal and took up the banner of what we now call the New York Health Act. Gottfried was a supporter and champion for the passage and implementation of the Act until he retired from the Assembly in 2023. Because of his commitment, the NYHA passed several times in the Assembly.

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, current chair of the Committee on Health and a longtime supporter of the bill, became the new sponsor of the NYHA. The bill has

Assembly members Sarahana Shrestha, Emily Gallagher, and Marcela Mitaynes, and State Senator Jabari Brisport, all supporters of the New York Health Act.

yet to be passed the Senate, but Senator sponsor Gustavo Rivera is working very hard on making the legislation a priority. Great strides have been made in achieving a comprehensive health plan for all New Yorkers from its humble inception because of the dedication of those leaders and advocates and because of the relationships and coalitions that have been built statewide and nationally in the movement for healthcare for all.

How does an organization like NYSNA continue to move forward in growing a movement to advance its legislative agenda and win healthcare as a human right for All New Yorkers? We have joined together with individuals, labor unions, and community organizations that support the bill, such as 1199 SEIU, Communication Workers of America (CWA), Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) ,Physicians for National Health Program (PNHP-NY Metro), The Campaign for New York Health, New York Working Families Party (NY-WFP), New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN), Labor Campaign for Single Payer, local community and church organizations and many others.

Why do so many people and organizations support the NYHA? Because once it is passed and implemented the NYHA would create a statewide universal healthcare system that would provide healthcare from birth to portable long term health care. It would also eliminate the need for unions to negotiate health care with their employers and focus on improving workplace conditions and retention of workers.

History has shown that you need a critical mass of like-minded people to make your voices heard with legislators that can make the New York Health Act the law in New York. The NYHA is the only bill currently in the New York legislature that would guarantee high quality, comprehensive health care for all New Yorkers without exceptions. Join us in our fight. Health care is a Human Right!

> "History has shown that you need a critical mass of like-minded people to make your voices heard"
>
> -Marva Wade, RN

NYSNA leaders meet with Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas and Senator Gustavo Rivera to strategize for the passage of the New York Health Act in 2024

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and Executive Director of the Campaign for New York Health Melanie D'Arrigo show their support for the New York Health Act at the 2023 Queens Pride Parade
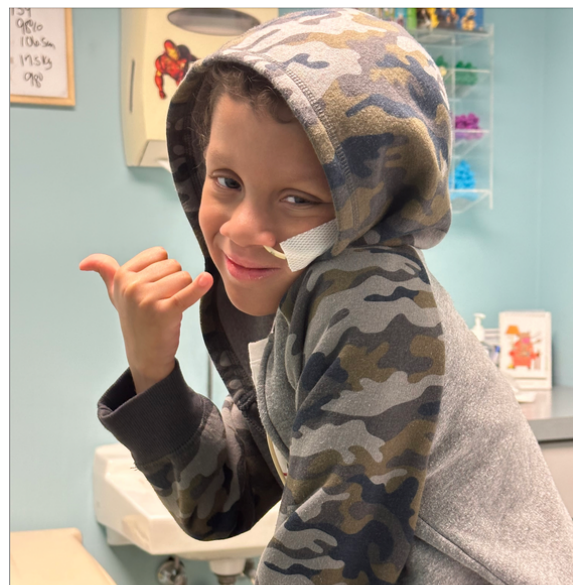
When a Child Gets Sick Under Our Current Privatized Healthcare System

BY MARGARET FRANKS, RN

October 23, 2022 is a date that Jasmine Spooner, RN will never forget. She brought her then 3-year-old son, Greyson to the Emergency Room at Vassar Brothers to see why he was having abdominal pain where X-rays revealed something more troubling than the constipation she had expected. She was told to take Greyson to the pediatrician the next morning and upon doing so, found herself in Westchester Medical Center by noon where Greyson began what would be the start of many rounds of tests. On Oct. 26, Greyson was diagnosed with Stage 4 Ganglioneuroblastoma, a cancer that can affect kids in their first five years. In the 16 months since he was initially diagnosed, her little boy has endured chemotherapy, radiation, endless bloodwork, transfusions, biopsies, and prolonged hospitalizations Through it all this child has kept smiling and his family have rallied around him to give him as normal a childhood as he can have.

Co-workers started a GoFundMe for Greyson after the initial diagnosis because we knew that despite having NYSNA health insurance, there would be many incidentals that would not be covered in the many trips between Poughkeepsie and Westchester that were to come. Greyson is in the maintenance phase right now which requires him to be hospitalized 1 week out of each month and travel to Westchester Medical Center twice a week when he's home. He has an NG tube for tube feeds and medications. Jasmine must pay out of pocket for the syringes, saline and flushes needed for his leukine injections as they are not covered by insurance.

Passing the New York Health Act would ensure that other parents would not have to worry about coverage for themselves or their children no matter what the circumstances. Under our current privatized system, medical -related expenses are behind approximately one third of all GoFundMe fundraisers clearly showing that the current system forces us to rely on the generosity of others for what should be a guaranteed right. We must change the course of healthcare and as nurses we have the power to do so. Please join us in helping to pass the New York Health Act so families across New York have guaranteed care for them and their children.

Jasmine Spooner, RN's son Greyson who is bravely battling cancer as his caregivers struggle to pay for all associated costs with treatment due to our current healthcare system.

Upcoming Single Payer Events for NYSNA Members:

BUFFALO CONFERENCE TO EXPLORE THE INTERSECTION OF HEALTH JUSTICE AND RACIAL JUSTICE

WHEN: Saturday, March 16, 10A.M. - 5P.M.

WHERE: Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Central Library, 1 Lafayette Square,
Buffalo, NY 14203

Join the Campaign for New York Health to hear from expert speakers and panelists on a wide range of health equity issues.

RSVP

bit.ly/healthequitybuffalo

CAMPAIGN FOR NEW YORK HEALTH VIRTUAL LOBBY DAY

WHEN: Tuesday, March 19, 10A.M. - 5P.M.

WHERE: Virtually on zoom

The Campaign for New York Health is kicking into high gear to push lawmakers to champion the New York Health Act, join them from a day of advocacy! The Campaign is offering an optional Lobby Skills Training & NY Health Act 101 on March 12 for anyone who is new to advocacy or who would simply like a refresher. **The registration deadline is March 8.**

RSVP

bit.ly/LobbyNYHA2024

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- Tonia Bazel, RN Secretary
- Vicki Davis-Courson, RN
- Denise Griffin, RN
- Nancy Hagans, RN, BSN, CCRN
- Michelle Jones, NP

- Mary Madden, NP
- Peter Pacheco, RN
- Bill Schneider, RN
- Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN
- Marva Wade, RN

Want to to get involved in the campaign to guarantee healthcare to all New Yorkers? Email us at: healthjustice4all@nysna.org

Or visit the NYSNA website to learn more about our campaign to win a Single Payer system in New York State

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NYSNA & NNU Believes Healthcare is a Human Right!

When NYSNA affiliated with National Nurses United (NNU) we became part of a nation-wide coalition of nurses, healthcare workers, and union members who believe healthcare is a human right and no one should profit off of a person getting sick. We know first-hand that patients should always come before profits, and need YOU to join this national movement to make healthcare for all a reality in New York.

NYSNA President Nancy Hagans with NNU Leaders and Congresswoman Cori Bush and Pramila Jayapal on Capitol Hill to advocate for Medicare for All in 2023

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Email us at: healthjustice4all@nysna.org Or visit our website to learn more about upcoming events: **bit.ly/NYSNAsinglepayer**