



NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees, Inc.

&

**Cross-union Retirees
Organizing Committee**



April 11, 2022

Good afternoon Councilmembers,

We have contacted your office multiple times since the end of January with information and articles about the NYC retiree healthcare issue.

The City decided under former Mayor De Blasio to cut costs on the backs of retirees by forcing almost 250,000 retirees into an inferior for-profit Medicare Advantage Plus plan, materially changing their Medicare. Mayor Adams is following in his footsteps even though he referred to it as a "bait and switch" when he was campaigning.

Since then, retirees have fought back and won every legal challenge against the City to stop the plan to privatize our Medicare. Even the penalty premiums of \$200 per person/per month were stopped by the Supreme Court as violating the law and our promised retiree benefits.

Comptroller Brad Lander rejected the contract after a careful review.

Despite all of this, Mayor Adams is pursuing an appeal in court. This David and Goliath fight is not over! We are a grassroots movement funded by small donations from retirees all over this city. We have won every step of the way because this is truly a matter of life or death for seniors in this city who gave decades of their working lives to NYC. A retiree should not have to worry their benefits will be stripped from them after 30, 40 or 50 years while living on a fixed income.

Many of your fellow NY Elected Officials have already signed the attached Open Letter in support of NYC retirees keeping their traditional Medicare and premium-free Senior Care health plans. Here are the Signatories:

*New York City Council Members**NYS Assembly Members*

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Kristin Richardson | Robert C. Carroll |
| Jordan Christopher Marte | Peter J. Abbate |
| Sandy Nurse | Stacey Pheffer-Amato |
| Charles Barron | William Colton |
| Shahana Hanif | Demond Meeks |
| Alexa Aviles | Jo Anne Simon |
| Julie Won | Gina L. Sillitti |
| Kamillah Hanks | Kenneth Zebrowski |
| Althea Stevens | |
| Jumaane Williams (Public Advocate) | |
| Tiffany Caban | |

Signors Updated 4/13/2022

Will you be the next to support your senior constituents by signing the Open Letter to Mayor Adams? We are reaching out again to ask you, "Where do you stand? Are you with us or not?"

If you agree with us, and the NY State Supreme Court judge that our health benefits should not be changed, then please sign the attached Open Letter today. If you are for the diminishment and privatization of our Medicare health benefits, then please contact us with your reasons why. If you are still uncertain, please call me so we can have an informed discussion about why we retirees feel so strongly about keeping our Traditional Medicare with premium-free Senior Care.

Thank you.

Marianne Pizzitola

President

631-793-9715

NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees, Inc.

&

Sarah Shapiro

crocnyc22@gmail.com

Cross-union Retirees Organizing Committee

(Reply to Sarah to affirm your support)



**CROSS-UNION RETIREES ORGANIZING COMMITTEE
&
NYC Organization of Public Service Retirees**



**Open Letter to Mayor Eric Adams Regarding Municipal Retirees'
Healthcare Coverage**

We are calling on Mayor Eric Adams to cancel the proposed Medicare Advantage Plus plan and continue to support the current Medicare/Senior Care health insurance coverage for municipal retirees.

As elected officials, as public servants, as fellow New Yorkers, we share your concern about the relentless rise in health costs. It is both an individual burden and a millstone for the city.

But we will not solve the city's problem by slashing access to care for older New Yorkers or by privatizing public goods. For New York City to shift municipal retirees from public Medicare insurance to a private, for-profit Medicare Advantage Plus plan makes no economic sense and is bad public policy.

We estimate that the new Medicare Advantage Plus plan will spend \$3,400 less caring for each person than is now being spent through Medicare and Senior Care. The City's retirees deserve better than this cut-rate health care.

Furthermore, the new plan is inequitable. The current Medicare plan is available to all. Under the new plan, higher income retirees will be able to opt out, pay the \$2,300 annual premium for the new Senior Care, and stay on Medicare. Those with lower incomes, most particularly retirees who are women and those who are black and brown, will have to accept this inferior private plan.

People will die so that the City can save money short-term, so for-profit insurers like Empire can enjoy a windfall, and so leaders of "non-profits" can award themselves exorbitant salaries.

Those who have served New York City deserve better. Thanks to an influx of federal money, the City does not have to eliminate its support for its retirees' care. There is no excuse for this attack on the wellbeing of retirees.

The City can find other ways to save money on health care. A number of them, including self-insurance by the City for coverage of its current employees, were identified in the 2018 agreement between the City and the Municipal Labor Committee and could save even more for the City than this damaging move.

Instead of going backwards to privatize retiree health care, the City should continue to support Senior Care as the Medicare supplement so its retirees can remain on public Medicare, which works for all of them.

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