



**Testimony Presented to the  
Joint Senate Assembly Health Committee Hearing  
On the New York Health Act  
On October 23, 2019  
Bronx, NY**

**Testimony Presented to the**

**Joint Senate Assembly Health Committee Hearing  
On October 23, 2019  
Bronx, NY**

This testimony is submitted by the co-chairs of the Healthcare Committee of NYCD16 Indivisible, a grassroots organization with more than 1,100 members who live in New York's 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. The Healthcare Committee has been actively advocating on both state and federal healthcare issues, including reproductive rights, contraception coverage, and the various federal proposals for the expansion of health coverage and reduction of pharmaceutical prices. We have also worked to counter the disinformation campaign targeted at those who supported the state's Reproductive Health Act and have advocated to reverse cutbacks to the Affordable Care Act and minimize the impact of any cutbacks. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony.

At today's hearing you will be hearing from senior healthcare officials (both inside and outside of government) as well as members of the community all of whom share their support of the New York Health Act. Those involved directly in healthcare as practitioners will testify to their frustration on behalf of their patients (often risking worsening or prolonged illness or death) and the many administrative burdens of using the current non-system. Community members will report on their first-hand experiences of the personal and family tragedies that are currently unavoidable in the healthcare complexities that overwhelm them.

We believe that the only reasonable solution is the promise contained in the New York Health Act, which will provide comprehensive care to all New Yorkers as a right. We want to express our gratitude to Assembly Member Gottfried and

**NYCD16Indivisible Testimony**  
**Joint Senate Assembly Health Committee Hearing**  
**October 23, 2019**  
**Page 2**

Senator Rivera for their consistent leadership in developing the New York Health Act and join with so many others to urge the legislature and governor to enact, sign and implement this landmark legislation.

The New York Health Act directly addresses the two most egregious problems that we face: the financial barriers that exist for so many who want, and in many cases desperately need, healthcare services, and the resulting limited access to healthcare services for so many New Yorkers. The Act establishes a system of universal coverage, thereby assuring universal access, with a truly comprehensive scope of services from outpatient primary and specialty care, to hospital and long-term care, to pharmaceuticals and allied services such as physical and occupational therapy. In its comprehensive approach, it fills in some of the most glaring gaps in the system such as dental and eyeglasses for those on Medicare.

Even at its best, current pay-to-play healthcare will never address the basic needs of New Yorkers. Those with commercial insurance face premium spikes, deductibles, co-pays, service denials, out-of-network nightmares, and caps that often result in financial disaster, lack of needed care, or worse. On the public side, while Medicaid and Medicare are essential entitlements and supposedly offer more comprehensive services, the fact is that both programs have serious gaps and numerous shortcomings in the way they are structured, administered and implemented in the real world.

**NYCD16Indivisible Testimony**  
**Joint Senate Assembly Health Committee Hearing**  
**October 23, 2019**  
**Page 3**

Securing healthcare as a right and gaining universal access to services in New York State can become a reality with the enactment and implementation of The New York Health Act. We urge prompt action in the coming legislative session.

Dr. Peter Beitchman  
Judy Fletcher  
Kami Seligman, MD  
Contact: [pbeitchman@aol.com](mailto:pbeitchman@aol.com)