



CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEFFREY LEFRANCOIS
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

January 23, 2024

Adrienne Adams
City Council Speaker
NYC City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

**Re: NYC Retirees Medicare
Bill 1099-2023**

Dear Speaker Adams,

Manhattan Community Board 4's (MCB4) Full Board at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 4, 2023, voted 37 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 3 present but not eligible to vote, to (1) request a City Council hearing about protecting the healthcare benefits of retired City workers and (2) support the adoption of Bill Intro 1099-2023.

On September 7, 2023, at the HHHS committee's meeting, two NYC retirees presented to the committee about the loss of their Medicare benefits due to an agreement between the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) and the City.

Background

As you are aware, on March 30, 2023, Mayor Eric Adams signed a contract with Aetna that would move 250,000 retired City employees and their dependents from the traditional Medicare insurance plan onto a privatized Medicare Advantage plan. The change was first proposed by former Mayor Bill de Blasio and agreed to by the MLC, a coalition of union leaders representing most of the City's public sector unions.

As of September 2023, there have been five rulings in New York against the City's plan. On August 10th, a Manhattan Supreme Court judge ruled, permanently banning the City from removing City retirees and their dependents from the current plan and requiring them to switch into the Medicare Advantage plans or seek their own health coverage.

During the HHHS presentation, the two retirees shared that if the Medicare Advantage plan were to proceed, it would subject retirees to Aetna's private healthcare management system and requirements, with a time-consuming pre-approval process. It was further noted that retirees receiving specialized care, treatments, or seeing medical specialists would have to switch to providers in Aetna's network resulting in a loss of access to their current healthcare providers. The retirees have noted that this change would be extremely disruptive and cause negative health outcomes to our retired City workers and their dependents.

MCB4 Positions

We have the utmost respect for collective bargaining and union agreements. We also have the utmost respect for our current and retired NYC employees and believe in the rights of retired City workers to have ongoing access to healthcare provided by the City.

Our City Council has a pivotal role in this matter. Given that our retired long-time City workers and their elderly or disabled dependents face the potential loss of critical healthcare benefits, we request that City Council hold a hearing to take testimony on this critical matter affecting 250,000 retirees.

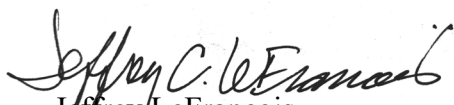
After a fact-gathering hearing has taken place, we ask that the City Council consider ways to provide continued Medicare health care benefits to our retired City workers. We understand that the Bill Intro 1099-2023 would grant the retirees and their dependents the choice of retaining their existing Medicare with a supplemental Medigap health plan that offers benefits comparable to the current Medicare plan. Bill Intro 1099-2023 would also be consistent with previous laws passed by the City Council, ensuring that every active and retired City worker has access to the City-funded Medicare and supplemental insurance.

Conclusion

For these reasons, we request that the City Council (1) hold a City Council hearing to discuss and explore ways to protect the Medicare healthcare benefits of retired City workers and (2) support the adoption of Bill Intro 1099-2023. We further urge the State Assembly, State Senate, and Governor to encourage the City to maintain Medicare benefits for already retired New York City employees.

Best,

Sincerely,


Jeffrey LeFrancois
Chair

Manhattan
Community Board 4



Joe Restuccia
Chair
Housing, Health, Human Services
Committee



Maria Ortiz
Chair
Housing, Health, Human Services
Committee