

Retiree Advocate UFT

Protecting retirees • Supporting working members
Fighting for public education

President Mulgrew... *Wellness Matters!*

For two years, UFT retirees in Retiree Advocate/UFT and our municipal-union allies have fought to save our healthcare benefits, specifically our cost-free Medicare + supplemental GHI Senior Care plan. We've won a lot of battles in that fight - in court, in City Council, and in public opinion - but our UFT leaders won't back away from their love affair with Medicare Advantage.

Last Thursday, 13 MLC unions, led by UFT's Unity leadership, voted for a privatized, Medicare Advantage plan with CVS/Aetna. They plan to keep HIP-VIP, but end all other plans, including shutting down GHI Senior Care, which most retirees currently use.

In June 2021, the MLC tried to charge retirees a penalty to keep our health care. But the City law (code) protected us from Mulgrew, and the court stopped him from imposing a penalty on us. When the Adams-Mulgrew team tried to change the law in the City Council, they failed.

This time, the City and MLC (and Unity) know they cannot impose an illegal penalty for Senior Care. So what are they doing? They are ending Senior Care. If retirees do not want to be automatically enrolled into the new plan, we will be forced to waive our city benefits; benefits we worked our entire careers for. We will lose reimbursements. A Medicare + supplemental plan could cost a retired couple \$10,000.

Less health care for retirees? That's what preauthorizations do. That's not enough for Mayor Adams and Michael Mulgrew. Now they are looking to increase preauthorizations (decrease health care) for active UFT members. They issued an RFP to find a cheaper plan than GHI. They want to pay 10% less for in-service health care. How will they pay 10% less?

The blueprint is there. You already had gigantic increases in copays for ER visits and routine imaging. Just last week they announced \$100 a pop to drop into a CityMD (when your kid has a fever and the doctor's office is closed.) Increase copays and add prior authorizations. It's the same playbook that was just used on us. And just as most retirees will be compelled to eat the Aetna/CVS casserole because it's the only meal at the buffet, so the new GHI-CBP replacement will be the only dish for you.

Don't believe Mulgrew's prevarications. Sure, there is a healthcare crisis in this country, but our healthcare fiasco came about because Michael Mulgrew mixed UFT health benefits in the 2014 contract negotiations to pay for raises and retro payments. He bargained for something that already belonged to us. Instead of going to arbitration, he chose to sell off our healthcare. And he doubled down in 2018, agreeing to cut \$600M a year from our health benefits. Six-hundred-million dollars a year... into eternity! That money has got to come from somewhere, and Mulgrew already took his cut from retirees.

Wow. An 8% inflation rate, a 3% wage increase, and a 10% healthcare cut. Thank you, President Mulgrew. Stop working for City Hall. Begin working for us.

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Retiree Advocate/UFT is a member caucus of the **United for Change** coalition.