



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD 6**

1932 Arthur Avenue, Room 403-A, Bronx, NY 10457

Honorable Vanessa L. Gibson, Bronx Borough President

Honorable Oswald Feliz, New York City Council Member, 15th District

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Board Chairperson

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District Manager

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Oswald Feliz
Council Member
District 15, Bronx
New York City Council

Bronx Community Board 6 has been in touch with NYC employee-retirees and has heard concerns about attempted changes to their healthcare benefits. Beginning in the DeBlasio administration, the city attempted to switch the 250,000 city retirees' health insurance to Medicare Advantage in order to save money. Retirees are concerned that this shift in coverage means they may not be covered to see their current doctors and could experience gaps in coverage if their current providers do not accept (the proposed) Aetna Medicare Advantage program. City retirees have sued the city and have had their case seen by 13 judges, with each judge agreeing that this shift in benefits is illegal, and the city must continue with the current Medicare benefits offered. As a reminder, our tax dollars are used to defend the city in these cases brought by retirees. Nevertheless, the Adams administration has stated that they will continue to pursue this change in benefits after the most recent case was ruled on.

Studies do not seem to conclusively indicate that Medicare Advantage provides better care than Medicare. Some studies have indicated no statistical difference, others indicate better outcomes for certain conditions for Medicare Advantage, others (like a study on home health aide services) indicate better outcomes for Medicare recipients. Without clear evidence that Medicare Advantage programs improve health outcomes, this proposed change in coverage appears to risk disrupting retiree's healthcare coverage solely for the sake of saving money.

We believe that Council Member Marte's bill, Intro 1096-24, will guarantee that the city preserve the benefits currently offered to city retirees. These benefits are not a handout, they are a benefit the city agreed to provide its employees upon their retirement, and a benefit these employees earned from their service to our city. We hope this legislation will put to rest the ongoing efforts of the Adams administration and future attempts to disrupt city retirees' benefits. We ask that you support intro 1096-24 and speak with the Bronx delegation about supporting this bill.

Regards,

Evonne Capers
Chair
Bronx Community Board 6

Kristine Rivera
Chair, Health and Human Service Committee
Bronx Community Board 6