

Tell Lawmakers to Pass the Single-Payer New York Health Act (NYHA)

By Erlend Kimmich

Three Parks has long supported the enactment of the proposed single-payer New York Health Act (NYHA), which promises to bring quality healthcare to all regardless of income, employment status, or documentation. Currently the bill remains stalled in committee in both the NYS Senate and Assembly. The Campaign for the New York Health Act is planning actions in support of the bill this spring, and Club members are encouraged to participate.

The lead sponsor in the NY State Senate is Sen. Gustavo Rivera (D-33rd Senate District; NW Bronx). He is the Chair of the Senate Committee on Health. In the Assembly, the new Chair of the Assembly Committee on Health is Assembly Member Amy Paulin (D-88th Assembly District; south-central Westchester). Paulin has stated her support for the NYHA, but she says it will not move without union support. The UFT, which used to support the bill, and DC37 are both currently opposed to it, so Paulin and Rivera have their work cut out for them to

amend the bill to address the concerns of union brothers and sisters.

Meanwhile, health care costs are constantly climbing, as are the profits of the insurance companies. Many New Yorkers are being crushed by medical debt even while their life savings disappear to cover costs not covered by insurance. Many of us have no coverage at all or are underinsured. Union rank and file have had to concede wage increases to keep their insurance costs down.

We saw our nurses at Mt. Sinai and Montefiore hospitals win contracts, but not before they had to strike. Meanwhile, public hospital nurses are suffering from understaffing even more. This is partly due to an approximate \$20K per year disparity in pay with private hospitals. The nurses' contract expires on March 2.

What can we do?

First and right away, call or email Mayor Eric Adams and Council members Gale Brewer and Shaun Abreu. Let them know that the city must pay fairly and that public hospital nurses should get a fair contract. To reach Mayor Adams, you can leave a message at 311.

We must also continue to fight to pass the NYHA. A broad coalition including the NYC Food Delivery Movement; the New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN), the DSA Health Working Group, Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP), the Undocumented Women's Fund and other groups is planning a major public action on April 15, including a press conference, a bike ride and a rally. In the weeks leading up to it, coalition members are launching a letters to legislators and editors campaign. Chris Stanfield is heading up the letter writing and can be contacted at 917 449 1874 or chriseye9@gmail.com. To get involved in other activities, please fill out this organizing [survey flyer](#). For more info on the New York Health Act, see the Three Parks [video](#).