

RETIRED LIEUTENANTS ASSOCIATION NYPD

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No to Medicare Advantage Plan:

NYC owes its retirees the fair coverage they earned

By NATHAN LEVENTHAL the Daily News October 8, 2023

Mayor Adams has rightly been critical of a series of misguided decisions by the United States Supreme Court, expressing outrage at the high court for stripping away federal protection for a woman's right to choose, in consultation with her doctor, concerning her reproductive rights.

And yet, the mayor need not look as far as Washington for an example of the government attempting to limit the medical choices of individuals needing health care. In a shameful deal with some of the city's more powerful municipal labor unions — a deal opposed by many other municipal unions — he has sold 250,000 city retirees down the river by continuing to attempt to remove their earned traditional Medicare benefits, proposing to limit their choice by forcing them into a Medicare Advantage Plan.

First proposed during the de Blasio administration, switching retirees into Medicare Advantage was claimed by the proponents in City Hall and some union leaders to save the city hundreds of millions of dollars every year, a figure that is almost certainly inflated. Those additional dollars would then presumably be available to fund the inflationary wage increases recently granted to those unions — without so much as even a token effort by the city to lower operational expenses through productivity increases and other savings.

In seeking to impose on city retirees an Aetna "advantage" medical plan — a misnomer if there ever was one — Adams is continuing the de Blasio effort to try to privatize city retirees' health care by placing it in the hands of a for-profit corporation, whose every incentive is to maximize subsidy from the federal government and minimize costs expended for the health care of city retirees.

And this is not just conjecture.

Private, for-profit Medicare alternative insurance companies have long been scrutinized for their refusal to approve doctors' decisions as to the proper care of their patients. Indeed, there is a congressional and Department of Justice investigation into the actions of Medicare Advantage Plans — including of CVS/Aetna — of their unjustified refusal of doctor-ordered health care, overbilling, and general Medicare fraud practices.