

**Testimony of Blanca Vazquez, Adjunct Assistant Professor
Before the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York**

**Concerning Funding for Adjunct Health Insurance
In the CUNY Budget Request (Calendar Item 3.A.)**

21 November, 2011

Health care for City University of New York (CUNY) adjuncts is a right, and the right thing to do.

When CUNY recruits students to Hunter, it extols the benefits of a university education. I don't think CUNY can then turn around, and hire an educated work force under working conditions that would not be acceptable to my 87 year old mother, a proud factory worker and union member. Her benefits were not the best, which is also the case with adjunct health care today, but she was covered and more importantly, her children were covered. It meant preventive care instead of acute care.

Health care matters, and you and I both know this. We all know this. It's not a perk and it's not optional. Like conversations about climate change, they can take place, but talk doesn't stop the icebergs from melting, or the work force you depend on from getting sick.

What should CUNY and the state of New York do to provide health care to the majority of the teachers at CUNY? The right thing to do would be:

1. Commit NOW to cover CUNY adjuncts as of the end of the current coverage by any means necessary. Save adjuncts the anguish and anxiety of not knowing for a year what's going to happen by resolving this now. CUNY knows what it has to do, so just do it.
2. Resolve the inequity in adjunct health care. Make the structural solutions needed once and for all. Adjuncts cannot be in a pool on their own because the numbers are too small to be cost efficient. We should be with the full-time faculty in the City system because we are part of the *same* workforce. Period! And we should not have to wait a year for coverage.

The success of a university depends on its faculty and staff. Without good teachers, CUNY wouldn't have a reputation to maintain or rankings to protect. This is also about treating the work force justly and with dignity. Not knowing if you can go to a doctor next fall wouldn't allow for that. To be a first-class university, you need to treat adjuncts fairly.

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