

**Testimony of Joyce Solomon Moorman, Associate 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

My name is Joyce Solomon Moorman. I am presently an Associate Professor in the Music and Art Department at Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC). I have worked for the City University of New York (CUNY) system for 26 years, but 17 of those years were as an adjunct. I remember when health insurance first became available to adjuncts with five years of service. I now have to ask myself what it would be like if I were still an adjunct. Suppose I had continued working at LaGuardia Community College, New York City College of Technology, and Brooklyn College and not gotten the full-time position at BMCC in 2003?

I look back to the '80s after I graduated from Teachers College Columbia University with the Ed. D. degree in music. I applied for full-time jobs but didn't get one. I then started working at private music schools. A year after graduation I began working at BMCC as an adjunct and continued working at private music schools. Through my husband's union, I had health insurance, but it was not a very good plan. Luckily, I did not have any major health problems. When I finally qualified for adjunct health insurance, my husband, a free-lance musician, was so impressed by my plan that he began to seek employment at a CUNY college. Almost 30 years later I am in good health, but I have to think if I didn't have health insurance, how would I pay for all the medical tests that are necessary to maintain my good health? I'm scheduled to have a colonoscopy next week. In the past month I have had a bone density test and a mammogram. The one doctor I see for a problem not covered by my health insurance charges me \$250 per visit. Fortunately, I don't have to see him that often. As you get older, the number of doctors you must see to maintain your good health increases dramatically, as do the tests you have to undergo. If I were still an adjunct, I would be in such a panic now. So I am willing to do almost anything to help my fellow adjuncts maintain their health insurance benefit.

I look at my fellow full-timers and want to scream at them, "How can you have worked with people every day for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years, know that the university cannot function without them, and not be willing to do everything in your power to help them maintain their health insurance?" In my department at BMCC, we have adjuncts who have worked in the department for 35 years. The Music and Art Department at BMCC has only 14 full-time faculty and 74 adjunct faculty. I do honestly feel that at least half of the adjunct faculty are qualified for full-time jobs, dedicated to teaching, and should be working full-time. How can the City University of New York employ people for 35 years and not feel responsible for their health insurance? I fail to understand how you can consider yourself a human being if you do not have any compassion for your workers and their health problems.

What will happen if the adjuncts lose their health insurance benefit? There will definitely be more class cancellations because of sickness. Adjuncts will try to work sick and infect their students and fellow faculty. The overall health of the members of the university will decline.

Many of the most experienced adjuncts will be forced to leave the system for jobs that provide health insurance. The CUNY adjunct health insurance benefit has been a major draw to CUNY of experienced adjuncts from private colleges and other systems that don't provide a health insurance benefit to adjuncts. The quality of education at CUNY will decline because of missed classroom hours, and a reliance on new, inexperienced adjuncts.

So I am very happy that the Chancellor has realized that it is absolutely necessary for CUNY to include funding for adjunct health insurance in the University's budget. Full funding of adjunct health insurance is absolutely necessary if CUNY is to maintain its high quality of education. Unfortunately, we now seem to be living in a time when narrow-minded little men, who only think of lining their own pockets and not about what is best for the community as a whole, seem to control the government. It is essential to the continued success of CUNY that the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor impress the governor and the mayor with the fact that fully funded adjunct health insurance will benefit the city and state. Funding health insurance for adjuncts will help CUNY maintain its high standards of education; help CUNY produce qualified workers for the state and city businesses and institutions, and help CUNY produce Rhode and Fulbright scholars. Fully funded adjunct health insurance is a priority if CUNY is to continue to be a stellar university system.