[redacted]
Forest Hills, New York 11375
[redacted]

September 1, 2012

Health Bureau - Premium Rate Adjustments
New York State Department of Financial Services
25 Beaver Street
New York, New York 10004

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed is a copy of the letter I mailed to your office on July, 26, 2012 regarding the proposed increase of 26% requested by HIP Health Plan of New York. Since my July 26 letter was not acknowledged or replied to I just wanted to make certain that you received my letter so I am sending an additional copy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

[redacted]

[redacted]
Forest Hills, New York 11375
[redacted]

July 26, 2012

Health Bureau - Premium Rate Adjustments
New York State Department of Financial Services
25 Beaver Street
New York, N.Y. 10004

Dear Sir or Madam:

I recently received a letter from Emblem Health informing me that HIP Health Plan of New York (HIP) is applying to the New York State Department of Financial Services (NYSDFS) for a rate change to my HIP HMO Direct Pay Governor's Bill plan. The requested rate increase is 26%.

If the requested rate increase is approved the monthly premiums for individual coverage would increase from $918.03 to $1,156.72. The annual cost of health insurance for my wife and I would be over $27,750.00.

In January, 2009 HIP increased individual monthly rates from $602.10 to $752.63, in January, 2011 the monthly rate was increased to $864.03, and in January, 2012 the monthly rate increased to $918.03. If the requested rate increase is approved by NYSDFS rates will have increased by more than 92% in just four years.

HIP recently came out with a new drug formulary which eliminates coverage for many common medications that were previously covered. Both my wife and I had to switch our medications in order to continue to be covered. If the new medications do not work we will have to pay out of pocket for medications that were previously covered. Even though HIP's new drug formulary is reducing HIP's expenses this is obviously not enough as HIP is still requesting a 26% premium increase for health insurance that now covers fewer prescription drugs.

If a 26% rate increase is approved for succeeding years premiums would more than double in just three years and would more than quadruple in just six years. After just six years of successive 26% increases a married couple would be paying over $100,000 annually for health insurance. If NYSDFS allows premium increases of this magnitude in just a few years individual health insurance would be unaffordable for the overwhelming majority of New Yorkers.

HIP is a not-for-profit corporation and its form 990 is publicly available on sites like guidestar.org. In its 2010 form 990 (the most recent year posted) HIP states that its mission is that HIP is "committed to providing affordable, quality health coverage.....so members have access to the medical care they need at prices they can afford". It is difficult for me to see how HIP is complying with its mission statement given the exorbitant 26% requested rate increase, on top of the already substantial increases of the past four years.

Even though HIP is a not-for-profit corporation, according to its 2010 form 990 the total compensation (which includes deferred compensation) for HIP's Chairman and C.E.O. was in excess of 8.5 million dollars and the total compensation of HIP's President and C.O.O. was over 5.7 million dollars. Nineteen individuals received total compensation of over one million dollars and twenty-three individuals received total compensation of between half a million to just under one million dollars. In my opinion it appears that the premiums of hard working New Yorkers are financing extremely high compensation for numerous individuals who work for this non-profit organization.

Individual health insurance premiums are already unaffordable for substantial numbers of New Yorkers. If rates are allowed to further increase by such a huge amount, many individual policyholders would be forced to drop their coverage, setting the stage for an uncontrollable spiral of even greater increases in future years because a larger and larger percentage of insured individuals will be those who are seriously ill with high medical expenses. Pretty soon only the very wealthy or the very ill would maintain coverage. And of course if people are compelled to drop their coverage because they can no longer afford the premiums, and then eventually sustain a serious injury or illness, New York taxpayers will be forced to foot the bill

if these individuals are forced to declare bankruptcy or apply for Medicaid.

In the press release issued by former Governor Paterson's office on June 9, 2010, shortly after the signing of the "Prior Approval" law, Governor Paterson stated that "deregulation of health insurance premiums is a failed experiment leading to unjustified premium increases and more people losing their health coverage." Former Governor Paterson also stated that "Health care is a right, not a privilege, and requires sound, balanced regulation to make sure insurance premiums are fair and justified."

Thank you for your consideration and I hope that NYSDFS takes these considerations into account and approves a substantially reduced rate increase close to the overall rate of inflation.

Very truly yours,

c.c. Governor Andrew Cuomo
c.c. State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky
c.c. State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi

[redacted]
Staten Island, NY 10306
[redacted]

August 31, 2012

Health Bureau – Premium Rate Adjustments
New York State Department of Financial Services
25 Beaver Street
New York, NY 10004

To Whom It May Concern:

I am enclosing a letter I received from Emblem Health, wherein they inform me that the monthly premium rate for my health insurance will go up by at least 30% by 2013.

I am a single mother of twins who recently returned to work and, as such, have very limited income and many expenses. It is with great sacrifice that I am currently paying my GHI health insurance now. If you approve Emblem Health's outrageous request to raise rates for next year, I will not be able to afford my insurance at all.

I am, therefore, writing you to beg you not to approve their request for a change to the premium rate for 2013. As you can see from the attached letter, they also plan to add additional costs. This is not fair to us and I'm extremely angry at them to have the nerve to let us know of their outrageous demands. Health insurance should have reasonable rates so everybody can afford to practice preventive care which would lead to healthier and more productive individuals.

Please do not approve their request!!!

I thank you in advance for any help you can give me in rejecting their proposed rate increase.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

August 15, 2012

EmblemHealth
P. O. Box 2890
New York, New York 10117-2087
Attention: Premium Rate Filings

Re: [redacted]
Medical Increase

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a client of your company, I find it somewhat disconcerting that your costs continue to increase.

I am well aware that we are living in a changing world where corporate structure's appetite is never met. My insurance has increased annually for the last several years. My husband passed in 2007. He paid all the bills for our household and since this time, I have tried to maintain my monthly expenses. I have begged and borrowed in an attempt to at least keep my burial and health insurances. It has gotten to the point that my income which only consist of a Social Security and Pension check monthly are my only means of support.

I have not gotten remarried nor do I expect to do so. Just attempting to stay well {even though I have been found to have a heart condition in the last 7 months} is all I can do. Someone must have mercy and pity on those who have been blessed to reach their senior years after working ***all*** their lives and give us a break with rising costs. I am already paying $918.03 monthly and ***that*** is a strain. You don't even give me dental which I have to pay out of pocket for.

Please have mercy on us and don't ask for an increase. ***PLEASE !***

Very truly yours,

[redacted]

Paw

c: Health Bureau ~ Premium Rate Adjustments
New York State Department of Financial Services
25 Beaver Street
New York, New York 10004