

**Testimony of Robin Salerno**  
**Partnership for Coverage Hearing**  
**Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY**  
**November 26, 2007**

Hello. My name is Robin Salerno. The story that I have to share with you today is short and simple. I am uninsured. And I have cancer.

Since last May, I have been having problems with my kidney. I have had a sonogram, a CAT scan and an MRI, and in August, my doctor told me that I have Stage III adrenal cancer. The doctors are worried that it may have spread further, though I haven't had additional biopsies yet. And I am afraid to find out what an additional biopsy may find.

Right now, I work six days a week and make roughly \$17,000 per year. That isn't a lot of money, but I still make too much to qualify for Medicaid or Family Health Plus. At \$17,000 per year, my income is at about 160% of Federal Poverty. And currently, Family Health Plus in New York State only covers individuals who make up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Since May, I have visited the doctor about ten times. Each visit that I make costs me \$58. To date, I have spent \$600 on office visits alone. I have been lucky – Hill Burton Funds helped me to pay for my CAT scan. My mother has offered to pay for my MRI.

But I don't know how I am going to pay for the treatment that I am sure I will have to endure. My doctors have not indicated what course of treatment I will need to follow. In fact, my doctors have not told me much. I cannot be positive, but I do have the sense that I am not being treated the same as someone who may have health insurance.

I do qualify for Healthy New York on the basis of my income. Unfortunately, I did not know about this program until it was too late. Now that I have been diagnosed with cancer, I have been told that I will face a pre-existing condition limitation that may last up to one year. I cannot afford to pay the premium of \$180 per month and not receive care for a year.

And, I cannot afford to buy a plan on the individual market. In Wayne County, where I live, the cheapest HMO plan costs \$767 dollars per month for an individual. That is half of my monthly income. And, I may be subject to a pre-existing condition limitation with these plans as well.

There are no options available to me as I am now – an uninsured cancer patient. And I don't know what I am going to do.

I thank you for listening. I hope that you will take a critical look at our health care system, and recognize that for people like me, there may not be options. And when there are – we might not be aware of them.