

FIGHTING FOR #OURHEALTH

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS & OUR COMMUNITIES SPEAK OUT AGAINST CRISIS OF #CORPORATEHEALTHCARE

#CorporateHealthcare has altered the workplace for medical professionals, and has created a crisis for communities who struggle with growing medical debt, restricted access to basic care, outrageous prescription drug costs, reduced insurance benefits, & medical decisions driven by wealth instead of health. The current system, much like Wall Street, functions by funneling money away from where it is needed most, to those wealthy few at the top of the economic ladder. Health care workers, patients and communities are standing together to demand a healthcare system that puts people before profit.

As HPAE members begin contract negotiations with Hackensack Meridian, the members of NJ Communities United, and residents served by Hackensack Meridian are speaking out against a profit driven system that demands life & death decisions be determined by the ability to pay.

We are fighting for proper staffing, reduction of medical debt and access to affordable healthcare. We ask that you join us and build a movement to confront **#CorporateHealthCare** and take back **#OurHealth!**

TELL YOUR STORY!

YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT AND WE NEED TO HEAR HOW THE HIGH COSTS OF MEDICAL CARE AND THE GROWING CRISIS OF MEDICAL DEBT ARE IMPACTING YOU & YOUR FAMILY!



TELL YOUR STORY BY VISITING
WWW.UNITEDNJ.ORG/TELLYOURSTORY OR
EMAILING US AT **JUSTICE@UNITEDNJ.ORG**



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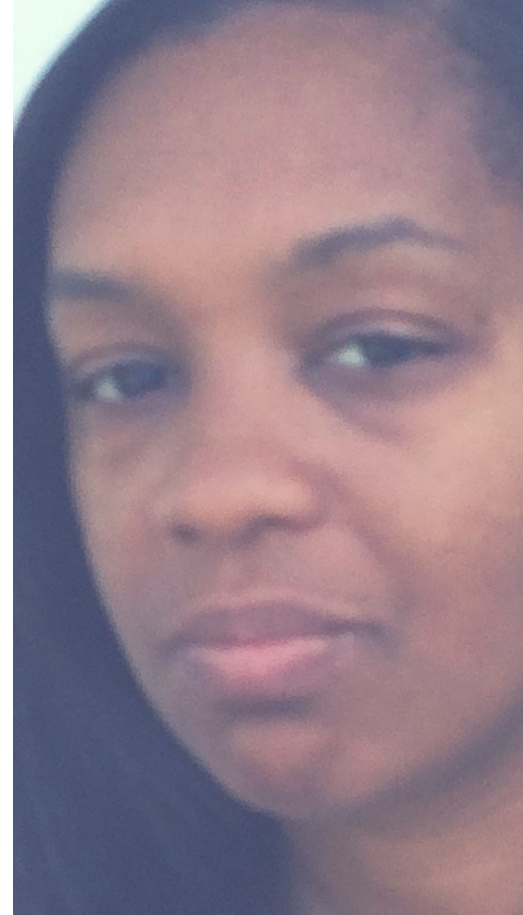
CLARICA

Clarica is an in-home child care provider taking care of children in her working-class community on the Jersey Shore. Although she is a union member, she is employed through New Jersey's Department of Human Services, which has yet to agree to provide health insurance to the state's nearly 2,000 in-home child care providers. She is prepared to join her union Sister's to demand health insurance as part of their next contract negotiations, but she is also part of a community effort to improve access to health care and to challenge the health care systems earning a profit while working families struggle to manage the high cost of medical care. If you ask her why she cares so much about this issue, her answer is simple:

"I was diagnosed with lupus a few years ago, and my life has been turned upside down. Yes, the disease has changed how I manage my life. Sometimes the pain and fatigue are too much to manage. Instead of protecting you, lupus forces your immune system to attack your body. It's the opposite of what should happen. And that's just one part of the problem."

Even though she works for a living and is paid by the State of New Jersey, she was forced to enroll in Medicaid to help cover the costs of her prescriptions and treatments. But Medicaid only covers 80% of her health care costs and she spends at least \$1,500 every year out of her own pocket – a steep cost for an in-home child care provider in New Jersey.

"The health care system we have is just like having lupus. Instead of working to keep us healthy, the hospitals, the health care systems, and the health insurance companies are all working against us. The physical pain I experience from lupus is just like the financial pain I experience trying to keep up with the costs of my medicine. I couldn't tell you which is worse, the disease or our health care system. They have both changed my life similar ways. But I know there's got to be a better way."



JENNIFER & CHRISTIAN

Jennifer is a Registered Nurse (RN) at Southern Ocean Medical Center and a member of HPAE. Most important to Jennifer is her title of "mom" to her charming 8-year-old son, Christian.

"Christian is the light of my life," says Jennifer as a bright smile spreads across her face. "But it's not without struggle. Sure, it's difficult to raise a child who has autism, but what I've found most difficult is getting him the comprehensive care he needs to live the best life he can. I work in health care which gives me an advantage on how to navigate the system – but it's not enough. I have to contend with the same insurance companies and health care systems that everyone else does."

Jennifer has yet to access the kind of care she knows Christian needs. Her insurance was willing to cover speech therapy for Christian at a Hackensack Meridian hospital 40 miles away from their home. But refused to cover more comprehensive treatments at a children's hospital specializing in the mental and physical conditions associated with autism. The decision from her insurance company had nothing to do with the services that Christian needs, but which hospital was "in-network" and which hospital was "out-of-network".

Years later, the best support Jennifer can afford is through his public school. While she is grateful that he has an Individualized Educational Plan and a team of teachers and social workers supporting Christian's academic development, she also knows that the school cannot address the medical issues associated with autism.

"What I know to be true at the end of the day, is that insurance and health care companies make decisions based on cost-benefit models, profit margins, and financial feasibility. As a nurse – and as a mother – I believe decisions should be made based on medical need and best practices."

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