

Testimony of Richard D. Johnson
Senate Special Committee on Aging
Medicare Advantage: Changing Networks and Effects on Consumers
January 22, 2014

Good morning. My name is Richard Johnson. I am here today to talk about my experience with UnitedHealthcare and all the changes they have made to my Medicare Advantage plan. I live in Bridgeport, Connecticut and I retired from working at the Continental AFA Dispensing Company in Black Rock, Bridgeport. I was President of the IUE-CWA local. I do not drive, so I use public transportation for my everyday needs, including my doctor's visits.

I have been a patient of Dr. Michael Saffir's for three years. I have also been seen by several other doctors in the Orthopedic Specialty Group (OSG), but Dr. Saffir is my regular doctor there.

Late last November 2013, United sent me a letter that said Dr. Saffir and the other OSG doctors had been dropped from the United list of doctors. The letter said I would not be able to keep Dr. Saffir as my doctor anymore, but it did not say why. I didn't understand why United did that. I get excellent care from Dr. Saffir, and he and all the doctors at OSG care very much about their patients.

I brought the letter to my December appointment with Dr. Saffir, and we talked about it. I had another appointment with Dr. Saffir this month, and in between United sent me three more letters saying that I could see some other doctors at OSG now, but they still say I can't see Dr. Saffir. I don't understand why United keeps sending all these letters telling me different things. I just want to see the doctor who has been taking good care of me for three years, Dr. Saffir. This is confusing, to say the least, and he discussed this with Dr. Saffir at his most recent visit last week.

I looked at all the Medicare Advantage plans, but I could not find a plan that had my primary care doctor and Dr. Saffir too. I don't want to switch again, because I know these doctors and I trust them both. Before I found them, I had had a bad experience with changing to a new doctor.

I want to say that I am not just worried about myself. There are lots of other seniors who are affected by this. My neighbor is having the same problems with her United Medicare Advantage plan, and I think many other people are in the same situation. When you have health problems, you want to stay with the doctors who know you personally and take excellent care of you.