

October 9, 2012

The Honorable Shelley C. Chapman
One Bowling Green
Courtroom 621
New York, NY 10004-1408

Honorable Chapman:

It is very distressing to learn that my health benefits may be in jeopardy. My husband who died less than a year ago from illnesses related to black lung worked in the coal mines in West Virginia for over 34 years. The coal operators had contracted with the coal miners to provide health insurance and pensions to their miners and their widows. My husband worked diligently and loyally for these companies to earn their profits.

I have a chronic disease and if I lose my health benefits it would be detrimental to me and my family. Currently, I live independently and rely on the UMWA medical card to provide for my health care. I have a monthly infusion that costs \$1200 per month and my open medications expense is approximately \$700-800 monthly. Visits to doctors occur every 3 months to my arthritis physician, twice a year to my medical doctor and twice a year to my cardiologist.

I do not have the income to pay for medical expenses and if I do not receive these medical treatments I would be unable to continue to live independently in my home of 60+ years. I would be forced to curtail my activities at my church and in my community and would be a burden to my children and community. My health would debilitate to being a non-functioning individual.

The UMWA benefits have provided assistance not only with my health insurance but with burial and funeral expenses since my husband's death. The UMWA was very supportive of our needs during his illness as well and are important to my health and well-being now.

I ask that you consider the devastation for myself and others with the risk of losing our earned benefits with the UMWA.

Respectfully,



Illene Barr
UMWA Coal Miner's Widow