

Don't Believe the Healthcare Hype

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UPDATED August 30, 2013: Top Teamster officials want UPSers to give up, go home and cry in their beer. They say there's nothing members can do to stop healthcare cuts.

Teamster officials are starting to send out notices to UPSers that say, "Effective January 1, 2014, you will no longer be covered by the Company insurance benefits but will be covered by the Central States Health and Welfare Fund TeamCare."

They say there's no point in Voting No again in the Central Region, Philadelphia Local 623, Metro Philly, New Jersey Local 177 or in the Southwest. Are they right? Only if members believe their healthcare hype.

Members can still win better health benefits. How? UPS can put increased money into TeamCare to match and maintain the current level of healthcare coverage.

Look closely at the national contract. It never even states how much UPS has to contribute to Central States to pay for members' healthcare coverage. **No dollar amount was ever put to the members for a vote. And the figure remains a secret. Why?**

Other Teamster contracts have a maintenance of benefits clause that says, "No health benefits presently in effect shall be reduced during the life of this agreement." UPS Teamsters covered by TeamCare deserve this language. UPS made \$4.5 billion in profits while paying for members' benefits last year; they can afford to maintain the same level of coverage under the new contract.

How to Fight the Cuts

Ken Hall has called a [national meeting in Chicago on Wednesday, Sept. 4](#) where they will go over the new TeamCare health plan. Local unions with rejected supplements in the Central Region, Metro Philly and Philadelphia Local 623 have been told to hold contract meetings to push the new plan in preparation for re-voting the supplements.

UPS Teamsters in these rejected supplements have the power to Vote No again if the proposed TeamCare benefits include cuts in their current coverage. The same goes for UPS Teamsters in the Southwest and New Jersey Local 177.

A No vote in these supplements will force UPS and Teamster negotiators back to the bargaining table—and it will increase members' leverage. Hoffa-Hall and UPS don't want to risk a third No vote which would require a strike authorization vote per the International Teamsters Constitution. Management wants the contract settled without even talk of a strike. That gives members' leverage—not enough to win everything, but enough to win a better contract.

It's Up to the Members

Teamster members are already organizing to Vote No again to protect their healthcare and win improvements in their supplements. Members in the Western and Central Regions and in Philadelphia Local 623 are all campaigning for specific reasonable improvements—from more full-time jobs at the massive airport hubs in Philadelphia and Ontario, Calif. to eliminating 17(i) in the Central. Members in the [Central](#), [Southwest](#) and Philadelphia have issued contract bulletins.

This movement needs you—your ideas, your questions, your help in informing and mobilizing other Teamsters. [Click here to volunteer](#) to help in your area or to send in your question or comment.