

**Shannon R. Lane, MSW**  
**Public Health Committee**  
**January 31, 2007**

**Testimony Re: HB 6693, State Health Care Plan**

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Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and committee members, thank you for your time. My name is Shannon Lane and I am a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. I especially want to thank my representative, Beth Bye, who is also one of the sponsors of this legislation.

I am here today to talk about the importance of universal health care from the perspective of someone who grew up without health insurance. Neither of my parents had the benefit of a college degree. My father was, and still is, self-employed, and my mother worked several part-time jobs at once before an illness disabled her. Neither was eligible for any type of employer-provided health insurance, and our income did not stretch to include money for health insurance or luxuries like preventative health care or regular checkups.

All of my adult siblings have dealt with significant issues into adulthood as a result of this deficit. We are not alone. The cost of deferred care such as this and care for the uninsured in Connecticut are estimated at \$572 million in direct costs, and as much as \$1.3 billion in indirect costs.<sup>1</sup>

As an example of the consequences of our lack of health care, let me share an incident that happened to me in high school. I fell and broke a bone in my foot. In the emergency department, the doctor looked at the x-ray and determined that I would need a cast and surgery. His next question was about the status of our health insurance. When he realized that we were uninsured, he sent me home with no treatment—not even the loan of a pair of crutches. I don't know which was more striking—the disdain he clearly felt for me and my family because of the burden we were in his eyes or my mother's pain at her inability to provide a basic necessity for her children. As a result of this inadequate care, this bone is still broken, and I've been told I will experience the related pain all my life.

My story is a small one, and I feel lucky to have such minor damage. But it is an example of the harm done by the current system of health insurance is magnified by the hundreds of thousands throughout our state. Between 1990 and 2006, the rate of uninsured in the Connecticut population has increased from 6.4% to 11.3%. This significant increase means that more than one of ten Connecticut residents lacks health insurance.<sup>2</sup>

Health care is a basic need for all individuals. Poverty already damages our children, families, communities, and society in many ways. You have the power to keep that damage from being a physical reminder to individuals for the rest of their lives.

I commend the General Assembly and the Committee on their work so far on this issue, and those such as the National Association of Social Workers and healthcare4every1 who have worked so hard in this debate. I encourage you to pass a comprehensive bill that ensures universal, continuous, truly affordable, sustainable, and high quality care to the citizens of Connecticut. It benefits all of us to keep Connecticut healthy. Thank you again for your time.

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<sup>1</sup><http://naswct.com/Healthcare4every1/FAQ.shtml>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.universalhealthct.org/get-library-resources.php?resourceID=162>