

**Testimony before the Public Health Committee**  
**Kevin Douglas**  
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**January 31, 2007**

Good Afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the committee

**WHO**

My name is Kevin Douglas; I am a third year student of Social Work at Eastern Connecticut State University. I currently reside in Willimantic and am a voting member of the community.

**WHAT**

I wish to address the committee on the need for a Universal Health Care Plan in Connecticut. The state is undergoing a major health care crisis is poised to implement some form of universal care. I am here today to express my support of that goal.

**WHY**

- Insurance is being put out of reach for more and more individuals every day. Today as we meet to discuss health care, nearly 1/10 of our population or 365,000 residents currently have no health insurance. The tragedy is 2/3 of those people are working individuals and families. I have been a part of that figure, as have my family members and many other individuals I met and learned about last year when collecting stories regarding how the lack of healthcare has affected their lives.
- Not only is insurance a serious burden on the working class, but also on new college graduates who lose their status of student are dropped from their parents insurance, And individuals transferring from jobs often have to wait up to 6 months before becoming eligible to receive health care benefits from their employer- if their employer can afford to offer health care benefits. It is likely that I will find myself in this category next year after I graduate from college.
- Finally- More and more small businesses are unable to provide insurance for their employees, and the health care related expenses driving large numbers of personal bankruptcies in CT.

**SO WHAT?**

The effects of the lack of affordable insurance are far reaching.

- Businesses are hurt by lower productivity from employees who are ill, and by employees who must call out
  - The states hospitals and public health centers are being inundated with individuals either seeking care for illnesses that could have been avoided with preventative care, or are seeking primary care that could have been provided at their doctor's office- if they could afford one.
- As the costs for caring for uninsured individuals and the hospitals they use, rise, so too does the burden on Connecticut's taxpayers.

**SUMMARY**

Connecticut already spends millions on health care. We have the resources to invest in a sensible alternative to our current health care crisis. The alternative is a Health Care system that is universal, portable, affordable, and comprehensive for all of Connecticut's residents. This means that everyone is covered, can afford the plan, will not lose coverage upon unemployment or employment changes, the plan will be affordable for Connecticut and it will cover many aspects of health including preventive care, and mental health and substance abuse treatment. We must not continue to leave our working residents without a feasible way to insure themselves and their families.