

6402



**NARAL  
Pro-Choice Connecticut**

**Human Services Committee**

**HB 6402, An Act Concerning Maximization of Medicaid Reimbursement for the State of Connecticut and Federal Medical Assistance Percentages**

**Testimony of Jillian Gilchrest, Executive Director**

**NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut**

**February 17, 2009**

Good afternoon Senator Doyle, Representative Walker and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Jillian Gilchrest and I am the executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut, a statewide non-profit whose mission is to develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

I am here in support of HB 6402, An Act Concerning Maximization of Medicaid Reimbursements for the State of Connecticut and Federal Medical Assistance Percentages. Currently, the state of Connecticut has the opportunity to receive a 90% federal Medicaid match—when the state's normal federal match is 50%--by applying for a Section 1115 waiver otherwise known as the family planning waiver.

The family planning waiver provides Medicaid coverage for family planning services to individuals in households with income up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level who are not otherwise eligible for Medicaid-- individuals of child bearing age who do not already have children. The current income ceiling for Medicaid coverage is 157% of poverty; while the ceiling for pregnancy related care is 185% of poverty.

The objectives of the family planning waiver are to:

- Increase the availability and proper use of effective contraceptive methods,
- Increase the spacing between pregnancies,
- Decrease the number of unintended pregnancies,
- Decrease the number of Medicaid paid pregnancies and deliveries, and
- Improve reproductive health.

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, establishing parity between the Medicaid eligibility level for family planning and the level for pregnancy-related care that Connecticut currently receives would result in state savings of \$15.5 million annually.<sup>1</sup>

During the 2005 Connecticut legislative session, legislation was passed that required the Department of Social Services to apply for a family planning waiver. The Department of Social Services applied for the waiver in 2006, but has yet to submit the revisions that were asked of them. With a new federal administration, this is an ideal time for Connecticut to apply for the family planning waiver (section 1115).

Currently, 27 states have Medicaid Family Planning Waivers to expand coverage for family planning services to individuals who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid and unable to access reproductive health care. Please allow Connecticut to join these states by funding the family planning waiver, a prevention program that will benefit Connecticut's citizens while saving the state dollars.

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<sup>1</sup> Frost JJ, Son field A and Gold RB, Estimating the Impact of Expanding Medicaid Eligibility for Family Planning Services, *Occasional Report*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2006, No. 28.