



UNIVERSAL
HEALTH CARE
FOUNDATION
of CONNECTICUT

Testimony
Supporting the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Connecticut Women's Health Campaign
Appropriations Committee
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I am here on behalf of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, and as a member of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign Executive Committee of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). I support PCSW and the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign as the preeminent voice advocating to insure that the health care needs of women are addressed.

PCSW has chosen as one of its three results areas that, "All Connecticut women have optimal health and wellness throughout the lifespan". They serve a crucial function in moving Connecticut's health agenda forward. Women face significant challenges in the health care arena. In addition to having distinct health care needs such as reproductive health, they are more prone than men to have chronic conditions requiring ongoing treatment. Women are also overwhelmingly the caregivers for parents or children with health problems or disabilities. As reported by the National Women's Law Center, women are more likely to need and use health services, but on average have lower incomes than men. Women with insurance face higher out-of-pocket costs than men as a share of their income. They face higher premiums in the individual and small group markets, and they are more likely to put off needed health care expenditures and to more frequently incur medical debt. They also have less access to employer-sponsored insurance and are more likely to rely on government health care programs.

I have been involved with the PCSW's Women's Health Campaign for over five years, first participating in their work when I was Chapter Programs Director at the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and now, for the past four years while employed at the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut. The current and previous Executive Directors of PCSW, Teresa Younger and Leslie Gabel-Brett have both served on our Foundation's Board of Directors. They each contributed an invaluable perspective to our work to achieve quality, affordable health care for every resident of our state.

The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign is a broad coalition of groups committed to working for the health and well-being of Connecticut women and girls over their life span. Their mission includes achieving access to health care for all women and girls and promoting awareness of

women and girls' health care needs. They have been and continue to be a strong advocate for universal health care, assuring that any legislation passed addresses the specific needs of women. Their role in this debate is essential. They also continue to work on other key women's health priority areas such as:

- Breast and cervical cancer screening and detection
- The Connecticut Home Care Program for the Disabled
- Women's behavioral health services
- Elimination of health disparities

Universal Health Care Foundation fully supports the work of PCSW and of the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign. We all benefit in our state from their leadership in protecting and promoting women's health issues. Please continue to fund this organization that is so crucial to our state's health and well-being.

¹ Institute for Women's Policy Research. *The Gender Wage Gap*, 2008.

² The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. *Case Processing Report, Cumulative and Recent Data, Fiscal year 2008-2009*.

³ Health Insurance Coverage of Women Ages 18-64, by State, 2005-2006." The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. December 2007. <http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/upload/1613_07.pdf>.

⁴ "Sexual Assault in Connecticut"(2008). Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. <<http://www.connsacs.org/learn/stats.htm>>.