

March of Dimes Foundation
Connecticut Chapter

March 21, 2012

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Testimony
Public Health Committee
Support for Raised Bill Number 425
An Act Concerning A Basic Health Program

Submitted By: Erin E. Jones, Director of Public Affairs

The March of Dimes Foundation is a 74-year old organization committed to improving the health of women of childbearing age, infants and children by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. We accomplish this by funding research, providing education and community programs, supporting families and providing advocacy.

On behalf of March of Dimes, I am testifying in support of ***Raised Bill 425, An Act Concerning A Basic Health Program***. We encourage the legislature to make decisions about who will be covered under the Health Insurance Exchange in 2014, and to decide whether the state should establish a State Basic Health Program.

With that said, the March of Dimes supports Raised Bill 425, since it will create a Basic Health Plan that **mirrors the benefits, cost-sharing and procedural protections of Medicaid for eligible populations with incomes between 133% and 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), particularly for children, parents, and pregnant women ineligible for Medicaid (i.e., lawfully residing immigrants)**. These populations might otherwise be required to purchase coverage through the Exchange. As indicated in the Mercer's Report to the Health Insurance Exchange, low-income parents would be unlikely able to afford coverage in the Exchange due to Connecticut's higher cost of living. The Basic Health Plan Option provides the state with an affordable health coverage option for these populations at no cost to the state, as confirmed in the Mercer's report.

Connecticut currently provides coverage for pregnant women up to 250% FPL in Medicaid. Under Raised Bill 425, that eligibility level would remain the same. The March of Dimes believes that this is an important protection for ensuring pregnant women whose income may fluctuate below and above 133% of the FPL receive continuity of care.

Therefore, the March of Dimes supports Raised Bill 425, since it would provide adequate benefits for women of childbearing age and children.

Please feel free to contact me for more information, questions or concerns.
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