

**Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Governor's Bill 6367,
AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for this opportunity to comment upon the Governor's recommendations for several programs important to the clients that Planned Parenthood of Southern New England serves in our 18 health centers across Connecticut. Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of family planning and reproductive health care in the state, and over a third of our approximately 65,000 patients come to us with Medicaid as their health care coverage. Many of them are parents or women intending to become pregnant. Being aware of their health status prior to planning a pregnancy is not only the best way to assure a healthy baby—it's a means of saving precious health care dollars.

We join other Medicaid advocates in expressing serious specific concern about Section 21 of this proposal. In specific, we question the assumption that removing "Husky A" parents over 133% of the federal poverty level from the Medicaid program will result in their seeking and paying for coverage under the CT health insurance exchange beginning in January 2014. We are also concerned about the children of this group of parents, since indications from the Administration itself point to tens of thousands, currently in Husky, who will be deprived of that coverage.

The premiums and predicted co-payments anticipated under even the least expensive exchange plans are likely to be well out of reach for many families living at this income level. At Planned Parenthood we share an extremely optimistic view of the future under the Affordable Care Act and we worked hard to assure its passage. But we know there will be a period of transition, when it will be important to preserve existing "safety net" programs to make sure that the federal and state promise of nearly universal health coverage is realistic. Research done for the CT Exchange has shown that only about half of Medicaid clients at this income level will likely enroll in the exchange.

We urge the General Assembly to reject the changes for Husky parents included in Section 21 of this legislation.

Planned Parenthood supports the expansion of coverage to individuals on Husky D (Medicaid for low income adults or LIA) up to 133% of the federal poverty level, as permitted by a state option under the ACA. This option will save significant dollars for the State over coming years, thanks to federal reimbursement for the full cost of Husky D enrollees.

We are also supportive of maintaining income eligibility for pregnant women at 250% of FPL. Investments in protecting healthy birth outcomes by promoting good prenatal care are obvious, which is why we are concerned by the more than 60% reduction in state funding for community-based Healthy Start programs that assist pregnant women as they access coverage and care.

We are painfully aware of the fiscal challenges facing Connecticut. The unprecedented threat of a federal sequestration looms over us as your committee meets to consider the budget. However, Connecticut is one of the nation's wealthiest states. Surely we can find a way to a balanced budget without resulting in lost coverage for our at-risk families at the very moment when the promise of the Affordable Care Act should be making all the difference to so many.