



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-6004

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 851:
An Act Concerning the Eligibility of Children Enrolled in the HUSKY Plan
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ
February 10, 2015**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ and I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 851: An Act Concerning the Eligibility of Children Enrolled in the HUSKY Plan which would provide uninterrupted insurance coverage under the HUSKY Plan, Part A and Part B, for needy children under the age of nineteen who have not moved out of state.

I am writing on behalf of the 240 congregations and more than 75,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members.

HUSKY has expanded over the years, but ensuring uninterrupted coverage for eligible children and families is an ongoing challenge. Studies have shown that maintaining health insurance coverage is vital to children getting timely and appropriate care, while gaps in coverage increase administrative costs. "Continuous eligibility" is a Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program option for keeping children insured for 12 months, even if income or family size changes, so there are no gaps in coverage. Connecticut should join the 32 other states that offer 12 months of coverage for children.

Continuous eligibility can improve the quality of health care for children, since they are more likely to receive timely care, get their health care needs met and fill their prescriptions. Continuous eligibility can reduce the administrative burden for the state. For example, the cost for re-enrolling an eligible person is over \$200 for each re-enrollment in Massachusetts. Connecticut had continuous eligibility for children from 1999-2003 and The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ supports restoring this important option for Connecticut's children.

Children are at risk of losing HUSKY health insurance coverage when families renew coverage or experience changes during the year; changes in family circumstances that affect eligibility are often temporary. This results in many people going on and off Medicaid and CHIP (HUSKY A and B) during the course of a year and at renewal.

All of God's children deserve access to healthcare with no gaps in coverage. We therefore, urge the Committee to support Senate Bill 851 which if adopted would provide uninterrupted insurance coverage under the HUSKY plan, Part A and Part B, for needy children under the age of nineteen who have not moved out of state.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of Senate Bill 851.

Blessings,
Michele Mudrick
(860) 796-3822; MicheleM@ctuucc.org

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860.233.5564 toll free) 866.367.2822 fax) 860.231.8111 www.ctuucc.org