Testimony of

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Regarding the Human Services Provisions of Governor Lamont’s Budget Proposal

Appropriations Committee
March 5, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the human services provisions in our state budget.

On behalf of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHCACT), and its sixteen member federally-qualified health centers, I want to thank the Committee for its dedication to listening to Connecticut’s residents about these important issues. Connecticut’s federally-qualified health centers serve almost 400,000 people each year, providing medical, behavioral health and dental care in over 100 locations across the state. Approximately 62% of Connecticut health center patients are on HUSKY, our state’s Medicaid program.

CHCACT is grateful to Governor Lamont for retaining HUSKY income limits and services in his budget proposal. The HUSKY program, which serves almost 1 in 4 Connecticut residents, has demonstrated efficiency, quality and a commitment to improving health outcomes over the past several years. HUSKY is a success story for Connecticut.

CHCACT recommends the Committee also consider the following:

1) **Restore comprehensive access to dental care:** In 2017, the legislature passed a $1,000 “cap” on dental services received by adults enrolled in HUSKY. As a result, some patients are putting off dental work, causing detrimental effects. This cap should be reversed, to reinstate more comprehensive access to oral health care.

2) **Provide HUSKY coverage of eConsults for all primary care and specialty providers:** eConsults are a type of telemedicine that involve provider-to-provider communication; primary care providers securely send patient information/tests to a specialist, who then provides advice within a few hours. The primary care provider then contacts the patient. HUSKY currently does not cover the cost of these consultations, and DSS proposals to cover eConsults have excluded reimbursement for health centers. Senate Bill 821 (currently in the Human Services Committee) requires DSS to cover this innovative service, whether at health centers or in private practice. This idea would present a savings in our state budget, of several million dollars.
Thank you for your consideration and your hard work on behalf of our great state. Please feel free to reach out with any questions: dpolun@chcact.org or 860.667.7820.