

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Camille Brown, and I am a Pediatrician working at Yale and Fair Haven Community Health Center. I am a resident of North Haven, CT. I stand in support of S.B. No. 956: "AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS," but with modifications that would ensure that this legislation extends HUSKY eligibility to *all* low-income residents, regardless of immigration status.

I have been a pediatrician for 19 years and have worked in CT for the last 10 years and before that CA. I have the privilege of working with many immigrant children and their families through my role as Director of the Yale Pediatric Refugee Clinic. This clinic partners with the local New Haven resettlement agency IRIS to care for the children resettled through their program. I am thus well versed in the medical, behavioral and mental health evaluations and needs of immigrant children. Our clinic becomes the medical home for these children allowing us to follow our patients for many years. This gives me the opportunity to watch these children who came through our refugee clinic become New Americans: adjusting, thriving and taking advantage of the educational opportunities to become healthy and productive adults. In addition, I also care for immigrants who do not come through the refugee program and thus work with a group of children who have no health insurance due to their immigrant status. It is devastating as a pediatrician not to be able to give ALL immigrant children the same standard of care. I have to make decisions about what medical evaluations, labs, referrals to specialists and dentists I can do. Importantly, these children have no access to much needed behavioral or mental health. In addition, families are frequently fearful and confused by what community supports, such as WIC, they may access. The disparities in the care for these 2 groups of immigrant children is heart breaking, especially from my past experience of working in CA where both groups had access to health insurance. Most of the immigrant children I care for have a high level of adverse childhood stresses from the stress of displacement, loss of home and family, learning a new culture and educational system, and frequently living in poverty. Yet, as a pediatrician, I can not offer them similar care as one has insurance and the other does not. We know that adverse childhood stress takes its toll and greatly influences future health, mental health and productivity. Offering all immigrant children access to Husky will have huge benefits for their medical and mental health.

As it is currently written, SB 956 leaves out many of our immigrant children under HUSKY A. I urge the committee to modify the language of SB 956 to extend current HUSKY eligibility rules to *all* CT residents, regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your time,

Camille Brown, MD
Director, Yale Pediatric Refugee Clinic