

The following letter was signed by **306 health care providers in CT**. We submit it as testimony in support of **S.B. No. 956**, "AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS," with clear language to expand HUSKY eligibility to include all low-income CT residents, regardless of immigration status.

Connecticut General Assembly Human Services Committee

Co-chair State Senator Marilyn Moore
Co-chair State Representative Catherine F. Abercrombie

Re: Health care providers support HUSKY expansion to CT residents without regard to immigration status

Dear Senator Marilyn Moore and Representative Catherine F. Abercrombie,

We write to you to express our strong support for legislation being considered by the Human Services Committee that would expand HUSKY eligibility to all low-income CT residents, without regard to immigration status.

As health care providers, we recognize our responsibility to care for all patients, regardless of race, income, or immigration status. Unfortunately, our state laws do not reflect that same commitment. While the uninsured rate in Connecticut is roughly 5.9%, an estimated 52% of undocumented immigrants in our state are uninsured. Undocumented immigrants are prohibited from participating in HUSKY, the state's Medicaid program for low-income residents, or from purchasing private health insurance on Access Health CT, the state marketplace established by the Affordable Care Act. Our laws have eliminated the pathways to reliable health insurance for undocumented individuals. Instead, immigrant communities are forced to rely upon under-resourced clinics and emergency care through hospitals. We as health care providers have all seen the consequences when our patients' illnesses go untreated, causing catastrophic complications and, it is important to note, requiring expensive hospital-based care that is ultimately supported by the state. These consequences are preventable, but the prescription must be written at the level of state policy.

Connecticut has already begun to recognize the moral responsibility and sensibility of making sure all communities in the state have access to health care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Connecticut has used Emergency Medicaid funds to cover COVID-19 testing and treatment for residents who didn't qualify for Medicaid based on immigration status. This was a wise decision, both to prevent illness and treat it early. It almost surely saved lives. But the wisdom of this decision is not restricted to COVID-19. Preventing disease and treating it early is the right approach to community health, from both a fiscal and moral perspective.

As health care providers, we understand the devastating human consequences of restricting access to health care. We ask you to support legislation that would remove immigration status from HUSKY eligibility rules and would finally allow our most vulnerable community members to access quality medical care. We thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Organizations:

HUSKY For Immigrants Coalition

HAVEN Free Clinic

Doctors For America-CT

Students for a National Health Program, Yale School of Medicine

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