

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

My name is Dr. Brooke Lifland and I am a physician from New Haven. I stand in support of SB956: AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS, but with modifications. SB956 as currently written leaves out many in our immigrant community, especially low-income parents and low-income elderly and disabled people. I support **modifying** SB956 to include ALL CT residents that qualify under the full current HUSKY eligibility.

As a physician, I work at both Yale New-Haven Hospital and the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC). I spend my time caring for patients with serious and persistent mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. These chronic illnesses often cause difficulties with cognition, to the point that people have difficulty processing basic information or accomplishing basic life tasks. At the best of times (and even with the full benefits that HUSKY insurance provides), living with serious and persistent mental illness makes it difficult for my patients to navigate the healthcare system. For my patients that do not have insurance, getting their healthcare needs met is all but impossible.

This bill would help my patients by allowing them to access medical and mental health care quickly when they need it. This includes coverage for medical and psychiatric medications and clinic visits, as well as emergency visits to the emergency room during times of crisis. Paying for these services out of pocket pushes families into debt that they can never recover from. Access to healthcare is especially vital now, as we are in the middle of a global pandemic.

As a physician, I am lucky to have access to the high-quality medical insurance provided through Yale. I live with two chronic autoimmune conditions and take daily immunosuppressants that cost thousands of dollars out-of-pocket. It is unjust that I should be afforded access to high-quality healthcare that allow me to live my life to the fullest with minimal pain, while many CT residents are not afforded the same right.

I support S.B. No 956 with modifications and H.B. No. 6334 as written and hope the committee will vote favorably.

Thank you for your time,
Brooke Lifland, MD
Physician, Yale University