

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

My name is Jocelyn Lillis, and I am a Medical Case Manager at Apex Community Care and a Hamden resident, and 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 am a Medical Case Manager for the Ryan White Program at Apex Community Care in Torrington, CT. All of my clients have HIV/AIDS, and I have been working in the field of HIV for nearly three years. Apex has a total of 140 clients, and many of them are undocumented. Our clients are fortunate enough to benefit from the Ryan White Program, a federally funded program that can pay for prescriptions, medical visits, housing, and emergency financial assistance. However, we must act as the payer of last resort to preserve our budget and manage these funds in good faith.

Our undocumented clients can access medication and visit their infectious disease provider, and we take care of these expenses for them. Clients must pay between 5 and 10 percent of their income based on the federal poverty level. Our undocumented clients have other health concerns, and without insurance and access to primary care providers and specialists, they are not getting that care. Additionally, without insurance, critical visits for oral health and vision are often out of reach for our clients. We stretch our budget as much as possible to accommodate undocumented clients who require dental and vision appointments, but we can only do so much. If these clients had health insurance, we could use the money saved to expand our existing programs and create new programs to help an even greater number of clients.

These clients work full time, go to school full-time, raise families and live in the shadow of the American dream. All of them reflect upon the day that they can become citizens and realize that dream fully. As upstanding members of our communities who contribute to society, they should have access to quality health care as a human right.

As it is currently written, SB 956 leaves out many of our immigrant community members, including low-income parents and children under HUSKY A and low-income elderly and disabled individuals under HUSKY C. These are some of our most vulnerable community members, and, based on my experiences as a Medical Case Manager, I believe it is essential that they be included in this legislation. 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.

I support S.B. No 956, with appropriate modifications to include all low-income community members, and ask the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time,

Jocelyn Lillis

Medical Case Manager

APEX Community Care

601 S. Main Street, Torrington, CT 06790

Tel. (860)453-0888/203-778-2437 Ext. 123

Fax. (860)412-5100