

Testimony IN SUPPORT of SB 956

My name is Dr. Molly Markowitz, and I am a pediatrician who works in New Haven, CT. I am representing myself, and my views do not reflect that of Yale Pediatrics. **I am writing in support of S.B. No. 956.**

I want to share a story about how the lack of health insurance for children, can lead to great harm and negative health outcomes.

As a pediatrician, I care for all children regardless of immigration status. The story I want to share begins when I was working on the general pediatric floor when a young boy was transferred to my care from the pediatric intensive care unit, also known as the PICU. Children admitted to the PICU are the sickest patients. But, the good news was that this boy was on the mend. After receiving a few more days of treatment under my care, he would be able to be discharged home to complete treatment.

However, I would soon learn that this patient would not be able to return home. In fact, he would spend the next three months living in the hospital. The reason for this extended stay was lack of health insurance.

Lack of health insurance made it impossible to discharge this patient home because he could not receive lifesaving medical treatment. Health insurance would have allowed this patient to return home and attend school, his parents would have been able to return to work, and his family would have been able to live together. Countless classes were missed, hours of wages were lost, and the patient spent many days separated from his family.

A child living in a hospital is costly and it is not just due to the cost of medical care. The cost on this patient's and his family's wellbeing was great. They all experienced great social and emotional harm.

This story is the story for many families. Due to lack of health insurance, children, often the most vulnerable amongst us, experience poorer health outcomes and greater social and emotional harm.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement entitled, [Poverty and Child Health in the United States](#):

*“Children in poverty who otherwise would not have access to health care have greatly benefited from Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and many provisions and protections of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.... **As a measure of benefit from expanded coverage, children enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP are more likely to access preventive care than are uninsured children.**^{46,47} In addition, CHIP has resulted in a 9.8% increase in the coverage of children with chronic illness and a 6.4% decrease in uninsured children in the general population.⁴⁸ In 2009, CHIP programs expanded access to comprehensive care by covering dental, mental health, and substance abuse services in addition to medical and surgical care for all eligible near-poor children.⁴⁹”*

The data from the [Kaiser Low-Income Coverage and Access Survey](#) showed that individuals who lacked health insurance experience many significant consequences (see figure).

Therefore, I am asking you to please vote in support of this bill SB #956.

I would be happy to answer any questions via email if helpful. Email: molly.markowitz@yale.edu

Thank you for taking the time to read my written testimony.



