

Public Testimony

My name is Laura Nally and I am a pediatric endocrinologist testifying in support of SB956. This testimony represents my personal views. I have been a physician for over 10 years. When I became a physician, I vowed to protect the health of all people, irrespective of their immigration status or social circumstances.

I have cared for undocumented children in the hospital who were newly diagnosed with diabetes. My job as the attending physician is to ensure that patients have received the appropriate education and training to be able to go home and manage diabetes safely. However, I have had to prolong a patient's hospital stay because they had no way to obtain health insurance and the insulin they needed to survive. I want to be clear when I say that we DO NOT have a stable source of medications for these children, and their ability to live depends entirely on donations, which are not a sustainable solution. Most children with diabetes cannot survive without access to insulin, and going just 24 hours without insulin could cause them to be hospitalized with life-threatening diabetic ketoacidosis.

As someone who has lived with diabetes for 30 years, I understand how hard it is to navigate the healthcare system, even when you speak English and have health insurance. I also know that many undocumented individuals are afraid to reach out for help. Our healthcare system is frequently dictating the treatment that I can give a patient, and taking away my power as a physician. You now have the opportunity to save those children that have no access to the medications and medical care that they need.

The bigger picture is that the healthcare system is currently profiting off of people staying sick and not having access to insurance. Various players in the healthcare system make more money if people have to pay out of pocket, rather than negotiated prices through Husky or health insurance. Rather than denying healthcare coverage to individuals who need it, we need to start fighting back against those profiting from the healthcare system before health care is no longer affordable for any of us.

Thank you for your time.