

Testimony for S.B. No.956: “AN ACT PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS”

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

My name is Jesus Morales Sanchez, and I am a community leader and volunteer with #CTInsulin4All, the Semilla Collective, and a Youth Development Specialist and Educator at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. I am a U.S. citizen, immigrant from Mexico from a mixed status family (a family with members who have different immigration statuses).

I am here to testify in favor of S.B. 956, as this bill could be the difference between life and death for people in my community including my family.

I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes on October 6th, 2018. At the time, I was uninsured, and unemployed. At the time of my diagnosis, I had lost over 100 lbs, and being 6 ft tall, weighed a scarce 130 lbs. I was able to get testing and treatment through the Fair Haven Community Clinic, which prescribed me insulin through the 340B program while I navigated the bureaucracy of enrolling into Husky.

While these safety nets are far from perfect, they were effective at keeping me alive. I often joke that our family was lucky it was me who got sick and not any one of my family members who are undocumented or who have just recently managed to obtain Legal Permanent Resident status. These safety net programs allowed me to get the care I needed, and the medication I currently need to survive at an affordable price. These safety net programs were available to me because I was a recently naturalized U.S. citizen.

Today as a U.S. citizen, I have the luxury to have a full-time job that offers health benefits through private insurance. Nonetheless, that is not the reality for people in my family who often postpone their care due to the lack of access to affordable healthcare and can only receive care when things have taken a turn for the worst through emergency services.

As an outreach leader for #CTInsulin4All, I have been vocal about the increasing threat that insulin prices are for everyone. My monthly insulin expenses would be \$1,874.28 without insurance. This figure does not include other expenses such as the needles needed to inject the insulin, glucose monitor, testing strips, continuous glucose monitor, glucose tablets, ketone test strips, glucagon, etc. Unlike Type 2 Diabetes, people with Type 1 Diabetes are insulin-dependent for life. And my diagnosis means that there is an increased likelihood that others in my family will be diagnosed in the future.

In a state where more than half of the undocumented population is uninsured, and also in the times of a global pandemic, it has been painfully obvious that there is a need to expand affordable healthcare to state residents regardless of immigration status.

Illnesses like Type 1 Diabetes do not discriminate due to people's race, ethnicity, immigration status or socio-economic status. Neither should healthcare.

Thank you for your time.

Jesus Morales Sanchez

he/him/his

#CTInsulin4All | Outreach leader

Semilla Collective | Volunteer

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England | Youth Development Specialist & Educator