

My name is Margret Sigurdardottir Blondal, I am a pediatric resident physician from Manchester, Connecticut. I am writing to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 956, 'An act providing medical assistance to certain individuals regardless of immigration status'.

In my training as a pediatrician, I have served immigrant children and families. I have also seen first-hand what impact access to quality health-care can have on a child's development. Barriers to care (such as out-of-pocket payments for routine health-care visits) significantly impair a child's ability to become a healthy, well-functioning adult. Children who are undocumented have had no say in their immigration. Denying children participation in health care based on immigration status is to deny them the opportunity to become happy, healthy, well-adjusted adults. Lack of access to primary care and preventative health services results in inappropriate and expensive utilization of emergency health care resources. Oregon, California and Washington have already passed similar legislation and what their experience has ultimately shown is that making Medicaid available to these children decreases emergency department visits while maintain an ambulatory care utilization rate similar to the general population. It is clear that if Connecticut is willing to pass this bill and invest in the health of immigrant children now, it will reap the dividends of that decision for decades to come. Please vote favorably for Senate Bill 956.

Sincerely,

Margret Sigurdardottir Blondal, MD