

**TESTIMONY OF
KATHLEEN SILARD
PRESIDENT & CEO
STAMFORD HEALTH
SUBMITTED TO THE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 11, 2021**

Good afternoon. Stamford Health appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **Senate Bill 1006, An Act Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status.**

Stamford Health is a comprehensive, independent non-profit health care system that serves a region of approximately 650,000 people. We employ more than 3,600 people, making us the largest employer in the city of Stamford and one of the largest in Fairfield County. Beyond the lifesaving care we provide 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, we contribute more than \$1.2 billion to our state and local economy and provide more than \$90 million in uncompensated care to the residents that need it most. We are committed to providing friendly, compassionate and personal care coupled with the most sophisticated services to all residents of lower Fairfield County.

Senate Bill 956 would provide medical assistance, including to pregnant women and under the HUSKY program, within available appropriations, to income-eligible residents regardless of their immigration status. A lack of primary care can result in far more serious diagnoses and far more costly care. An investment in care for this population could shift care to prevention that could ultimately save the state funds.

Stamford Health supports expanding state funded medical assistance to undocumented immigrants. About thirty-five percent of Stamford's residents were born outside of the United States. Our neighborhoods are vibrant and diverse. Regardless of immigrant status, individuals and families in Stamford need access to health care. Stamford Health is a significant provider to those who are unable to qualify for health insurance and Stamford is home to a number of federally qualified health centers who serve this population as well. Having access to insurance for immigrants is important for their wellness and for public health overall.

We note that six states and Washington, DC use state funds to expand Medicaid to cover children up to age 18. California recently expanded coverage to undocumented, income-eligible young adults through the age of 25 years. Stamford Health supports having Connecticut consider a similar investment in public health and urges the Human Services Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 956.

Thank you for consideration of our position.