

February 8, 2021

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING SB-842: AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE IN CONNECTICUT.

Dear Honorable Chairpersons Lesser and Wood, Ranking Members Hwang and Pavalock-D'Amato, Vice Chairs Anwar and Comey, and all other Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Kathleen Callahan, a resident of Stratford, and the Community Programming and Development Lead at the Connecticut Women's Consortium in Hamden. I am also the chair of the National Association of Social Workers Connecticut Chapter's Education and Legislative Action Network (NASW/CT ELAN). I am here to voice my strong support for *SHB-842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut*.

At the Consortium, our legislative agenda this year is highlighted by Creating Resilient Communities: supporting legislation that promotes an equity-based, trauma-informed, and resilient Connecticut. Underlying that is Delivering Comprehensive, Trauma Responsive Behavioral Health Care, calling increased funding for community-based, non-profit prevention, intervention, and behavioral health services and Advancing Racial and Social Justice: supporting legislation that promotes elimination of inequities and disparities. These are all part of this bill.

For NASW/CT, the legislative priorities build on those and include expansion of Medicaid/HUSKY eligibility to 201% of the federal poverty level, and Medicaid coverage for undocumented immigrants. This bill specifically addresses these concerns.

Over the past year, given my private insurance coverage, I have been able to secure appointments for my annual, preventative examinations with my primary care physician, gynecologist, and dentist. Needed medication, imaging, and bloodwork were included. I was also able to schedule unexpected neurological visits and testings due to concerns over symptoms related to my family history. And as the pandemic wore on, I was able to meet with a mental health provider to restart medication for a lifelong anxiety disorder that reappeared during these stressful, disconnected days.

I am no more deserving of this level of care than any other resident of the state. Health care is a fundamental right for all and a key to what life allows us to experience, learn, teach, and produce.

In closing, I urge you to vote in favor of *SB-842*.

With respect and gratitude for your service and consideration,

Kathleen Callahan, MSW
The Connecticut Women's Consortium Community Programming and Development Lead
NASW/CT ELAN Chair