



Testimony of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers in Support of Raised Bill 842
An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care

Dear Members of Insurance and Real Estate of the Connecticut General Assembly,

My name is Laurie Collins, Association Director of the Connecticut Association of School Based Health Centers, and I am testifying in support of HB 842, An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care.

Children and families across Connecticut depend on the services provided by School Based Health Centers to meet their needs for a full range of age-appropriate health care services, including preventative health care. School Based Health Centers across the state encounter children whose families struggle to afford their healthcare. Before the pandemic began, 51% of Connecticut residents struggled to afford care, and 43% of Connecticut's adults reported foregoing or delaying care because of cost. It is well documented that when parents cannot afford, or lose health insurance, their children are much less likely to receive health care visits even when the child still is covered. This lack of healthcare coverage is a significant barrier to care and treatment of illness and to the early detection of treatable illness for both adults and children. That said, children in Connecticut are especially vulnerable to being excluded from critical preventative care during a global pandemic, when they need it most. SB 842 expands eligibility for the state Medicaid program (HUSKY) so that more working-class Connecticut families can access dependable, high-quality health insurance they can afford, including thousands of families of color that are disadvantaged in the current health care market.

SB 842 would also expand health insurance options for undocumented individuals and families who are currently shut out of the health care market. SB842 will allow for undocumented immigrants to be able to purchase health insurance. Currently, undocumented immigrants who are not able to afford to purchase private insurance from Access Health CT, are also not eligible for Medicare or Medicaid. This lack of coverage is a significant barrier to care and treatment of illness. **This** lack of coverage to parents extends to the children, as a parent's poor health will negatively impact their ability to care for their children.

We are pleased to see that SB 842 seeks to establish dependable, affordable, and equitable public options for health insurance in Connecticut. In an effort to further the health outcomes for children and adolescents, we urge you to support SB 842. Please contact me if I can be of any assistance. I may be reached by email at lauriecollins@ctschoolhealth.org or by phone at 203-230-9976. Thank you for your time and commitment to this issue.

Healthy Kids Make Better Learners

CASBHC

P.O. Box 771

North Haven, CT 06473

203-230-9976

www.ctschoolhealth.org