



Scott Brabant
Board Chair

Luis B. Pérez, LCSW
President & CEO

Tues., February 9, 2021

**Testimony in support of
S.B. No. 842 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE IN CONNECTICUT
Insurance and Real Estate Committee Public Hearing**

Senator Lesser, Representative Wood, Senator Anwar, Representative Comey, and Distinguished Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

Mental Health Connecticut (MHC) partners with individuals, families, and communities to create environments that support long-term health and wellness. We support approximately 1,000 people per day through our advocacy, community education, and services that include housing supports and wrap around services in Stamford, Bridgeport, Danbury, Waterbury, Torrington, and West Hartford.

I helped lead the CT Parity Coalition (www.ctparitycoalition.org) to increase awareness of potential gaps in equity of care for behavioral health services. Like the parity bill, SB 842 would be a win for equitable care, as it would increase access to coverage of insurance, something greatly needed if we are to improve the entire system of care.

Access to treatment for mental health and addiction is a huge barrier for many Connecticut residents and it's one we can no longer afford to have in our way. According to a survey conducted by ALG Research, "84% of voters in Connecticut believe it is more important that we make changes to our current health care system as a result of COVID-19."

Restoring eligibility for HUSKY A (Medicaid) parents up to 201% of the Federal Poverty Level (currently it is 138%). 7 in 10 voters support a public healthcare option. Even before the pandemic, 51% of Connecticut residents struggled to afford their health care, and 43% of Connecticut adults reported foregoing or delaying care because of cost.

SB 842 expands eligibility for the state Medicaid program (HUSKY) so that more working-class Connecticut families can access affordable, dependable, high-quality health insurance. This will include thousands of families of color and undocumented individuals who are at a disadvantage in the current health care market.

The time is now to make a public health option a reality. Please change the game for so many Connecticut families who should not have to choose between health care coverage and other basic life staples.

Thank you for your time and for your service,
Suzi Craig
Chief Strategy Officer, Registered Lobbyist