

Testimony Supporting S.B 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut

February 8, 2021

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

My name is Alison Tyliszczak and I am a resident of Madison, Connecticut. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the March of Dimes. March of Dimes supports S.B. 842: An Act Concerning Health Insurance and Health Care in Connecticut. S.B. 842 will make health care equitable, dependable, and affordable by creating new public options for health insurance in our state.

The March of Dimes is committed to the health of all moms and babies and, in turn, equitable health care for pregnant and postpartum women, children and families.

As noted in reports, prior to the pandemic Connecticut's overall uninsured rate was 5.3%. Since then it has reached a staggering 6.8% for Black residents and 13.1% for Hispanic or Latino residents. Today, the pandemic is sickening and killing Black, Latino and Native Americans at higher rates than whites, reflecting ongoing health care disparities that have gone unaddressed. This plan seeks to rectify this by expanding access to affordable care.

Some of the ways this bill will address these health inequities include:

- Restoring eligibility for parents of children with HUSKY A coverage to 201% FPL. Under this HUSKY expansion, a family of three earning less than \$43,660/year would have immediate access to dependable, high-quality health insurance.
- Establishing a public option for small employers and nonprofits. This would provide a resource for those who lack health insurance and cannot afford to pay for care received.
- Would allow undocumented immigrants to purchase health insurance. Providing health insurance options for Undocumented women and their families eliminates a barrier that often prevents the seeking of reproductive health care before a problem escalates into something more serious and expensive.

**HEALTHY
MOMS.
STRONG
BABIES.**



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I would also ask you to consider including in this bill expanding postpartum HUSKY A coverage from three months to up to one year. Continued coverage allows for ongoing care and support to those women who experienced pregnancy complications or have chronic conditions, such as hypertension or diabetes. It also supports women who need help with mental health issues. Most importantly, the expansion of postpartum Husky A coverage is a key recommendation from the Connecticut Maternal Mortality Review Committee and could further reduce pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths in Connecticut.

In closing, I urge the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers to support S.B. 842 this session to expand high quality, dependable, and affordable health care by creating new public options for health insurance. Thank you for your time.

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Director, Maternal Infant Health Initiatives
March of Dimes