



Advocacy and Action
for Connecticut's
Mental Health

**Testimony before the Human Services Committee
March 25, 2021
Human Services Budget Hearing
S.B. 1056 An Act Expanding Access to Medical Services
Maura Shei-Hughes**

Greetings Senator Moore and Rep. Abercrombie and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee.

My name is Maura Sheil-Hughes and I am a registered voter in Portland CT.

Thank you for reading my testimony in strong support of SB 1056 AA Expanding Access to Medical Service.

Many years ago, I was a single mother of two young boys without health insurance and was working for a couple of small businesses that didn't offer health insurance.

I found out the extreme pain I was feeling on my side was a (giant) kidney stone that would not resolve on its own and needed to be removed. My PCP told me about HUSKY insurance and sent me to Middlesex Hospital to sign up. Because of HUSKY A, I was able to see a specialist and have the lithotripsy performed to crush the stone.

I don't know what I would have done without that help. One year later I found a job with Keep the Promise Coalition, got health insurance and got back on my feet. I am eternally grateful for the help I got when I was in a very vulnerable position and hope that you will support HUSKY insurances for others who are also in a vulnerable state and need that hand up. As we try to survive day to day with COVID19, more and more people are experiencing serious struggles with depression, anxiety and job loss. People need hope and help now more than ever.

My request is that you:

- Restore eligibility limits for parents or HUSKY A to 201% of the federal poverty level (FPL)
After cuts in 2015, more than 11,200 parents lost coverage.

- Now, parents are eligible up to \$3,5100/year or \$16/hour for a household of 3 with one adult working full time
- Restoring eligibility for HUSKY A to 201%FPL would mean the same parent could earn up to \$44,000/year or \$21/hr
- **When parents are insured, kids are more likely to be insured and see a doctor, amplifying the impact of this coverage**
- Increase eligibility limits for adults without dependents or HUSKY D to 201%FPL
- Right now, an adult in a 1-person household is eligible for HUSKY when earning up to \$17,774/year; if working full time, that would mean making \$8/hour, which is less than minimum wage.
- Increasing eligibility to 200% of the federal poverty level for HUSKY D would mean an adult could be eligible when earning up to \$25,700/year or \$12/hour
- As noted above, the cost of purchasing insurance on Access Health CT is unaffordable to residents in this income range
- Increase access to HUSKY to include all income-eligible immigrants regardless of their status--note this is NOT included in S.B. 1056
- Some immigrants who have been in the U.S. for less than 5 years are not eligible for HUSKY health programs

Individuals without documents cannot enroll in HUSKY at all and are almost entirely unable to purchase insurance on the Access Health CT (state health insurance exchange)

Thank you for listening to my testimony today.