

“Oral health for all”



March 5, 2020

**Testimony in Support of SB346:  
An Act Concerning Public Options for Health Care in Connecticut**

Senator Lesser, Representative Scanlon, Senator Kelly, Representative Pavalock-D’Amato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee,

I submit this testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative (COHI), a 501(c)3 nonprofit and the only entity in the state with the sole mission of increasing access to quality, affordable oral health services for all Connecticut residents.

COHI applauds the Committee’s effort to increase access to affordable, quality health and dental coverage for Connecticut’s residents, nonprofits, and small businesses. As oral health advocates, it is our hope that dental coverage will no longer be considered an optional or luxury item. Good oral health is essential to good overall health and well-being. Oral health impacts ability to eat, speak, work, pay attention in school, manage chronic diseases, and carry out a healthy pregnancy.<sup>1</sup> If you believe health coverage should be comprehensive, it must include dental coverage.

I urge you to support this bill and continue the conversation about expanding access to comprehensive, affordable, quality health and dental coverage for all Connecticut residents.

COHI would welcome any opportunity to speak with Committee Members further about dental inclusion in public option legislation. We also encourage the Committee to consider including an oral health advocate in any advisory body created regarding the Connecticut Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. If I can be of assistance in any way, please contact me at 860-246-2644 x 203 or [pareesa@ctoralhealth.org](mailto:pareesa@ctoralhealth.org).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin".

Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin, MPH  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health. [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/oral\\_health/FactSheets/DPH-Oral-Health-Card\\_v6F-\(2\).pdf?la=en](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/oral_health/FactSheets/DPH-Oral-Health-Card_v6F-(2).pdf?la=en)