



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

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Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

in support of Medicaid funding for Department of Social Services/Human Services

H.B. No. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021

February 21, 2020

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and honorable members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in support of funding allocated to the state Medicaid program in Department of Social Services/Human Services in *H.B. 5005 An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2021*. As the state's largest provider of family planning and reproductive health care to over 68,000 patients every year at 16 health centers across the state, Planned Parenthood is compelled to speak out about the importance of the Medicaid program to our patients, nearly half who are enrolled in Husky health insurance program.

Medicaid is an integral part of our nation's health care system, and without it, too many Americans—including a disproportionate number of women of color—would be forced to forgo receiving basic health care, including family planning and maternity care. The HUSKY Health Insurance Program is one of the most important programs for children and families to get and sustain essential health care coverage for their families in our state. Connecticut's Medicaid program now efficiently provides essential healthcare and benefits to approximately 800,000 CT residents, about 1 in 5 CT residents -- including low income seniors, children, parents, people with disabilities and other adults.

The Medicaid program is an essential source of health care for American women and has long recognized the vital importance of family planning coverage; in fact one in five women of reproductive age in our country are insured through Medicaid. Medicaid eligibility expansion has transformed how pregnancy-related care is paid for in this country, enabling women with low incomes to begin prenatal care as early in pregnancy as possible in order to improve their chances of having a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.

The fact that our state has been experiencing unprecedented declines in the rates of teen birth, and decreases in abortion across all age groups in recent years, is thanks in large part to the improved access to family planning and birth control that was embedded in the Affordable Care Act, including expanding Medicaid eligibility. The public investment in family planning programs and providers not only helps people avoid unintended pregnancy but also helps thousands avoid cervical cancer, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, infertility and preterm and low birth weight births. In 2016, Connecticut women who obtained publicly supported contraceptives care and supplies from Title X providers were able to postpone or avoid 7,420 unintended pregnancies and 2,510 abortions.ⁱ The investment of each public dollar in family planning saves \$7.09 within a year.ⁱⁱ

We also are concerned about the continued inequity in access to health care for residents of our state and barriers they face to health care coverage. Approximately 5% of Connecticut residents (187,000) do not have insurance. We urge the committee to consider restoring eligibility rates for parents in HUSKY A to 201% of the federal poverty level (\$43,657 for a family of three). In 2016- cuts to CT's Medicaid program resulted in over 11,000 parents losing their health insurance. In 2018 and 2019 CT took the necessary steps to stave off additional cuts. There are no affordable health insurance options for adults in this income range. The total out-of-pocket costs for purchasing coverage on Access Health with cost-sharing subsidies can be over 15% of a family's annual income. Now it is time to continue attacking the uninsured rate in CT by restoring health insurance coverage to working parents.

We also urge the committee to consider addressing the coverage gap by incorporating solutions to expanding health care coverage for immigrants in our state. A key factor preventing access to health care coverage for immigrants are eligibility restrictions both private and public insurance programs have. Under HUSKY, only "qualified immigrants" are eligible and forces lawful permanent residents, such as green card holders, to wait five years before being able to benefit from HUSKY. Additionally, in the private market insurers often require a social security number with the

application or proof of citizenship. Altogether, these barriers continue to prevent both lawfully present residents and undocumented individuals from accessing health care coverage

Planned Parenthood believes all people should have access to quality, affordable health care — regardless of income, insurance, or immigration status. Planned Parenthood is proud to offer quality reproductive health care services to tens of thousands of people each year, including people covered through Medicaid. Medicaid coverage must be expanded, not limited, especially with the continued threats to this essential health care program by the Trump-Pence administration. All people need and deserve equal access to comprehensive health care, including sexual and reproductive health care.

ⁱ <https://data.guttmacher.org/states/table?state=CT&topics=92+93+94+96+97+98+114+113&dataset=data>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/publicly-supported-FP-services-US>