

**Testimony Regarding H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2023 and Making Appropriations Therefor: Human Services**

Testimony of Jesmar A. Suarez Sanchez  
Norwalk, Connecticut.  
Before the Appropriations Committee  
**Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021**

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan and estimated members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Jesmar Suarez Sanchez, and I am from Norwalk, Connecticut. I am also a Social Work student from Southern Connecticut State University. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding the Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for Human Services.

I would like to discuss the importance of Husky and how it has helped me as many families and individuals in having access to affordable healthcare. Husky was important to me because for the last 14 years it gave me, along with my mother and brother access to the best doctors, dentist and therapist Connecticut has to offer. I unfortunately ended up losing Husky last October by small margin due to making “too much” money and not qualifying for Husky D. I have a part time job, as I am focusing on completing school, doing an internship, therefore it impedes me from getting a full time, good paying job. Although I may not be struggling at this very moment thanks to the help I get from my partner, I still don't make enough money with my part time job to cover co-pays, deductibles and other medical relates costs. I've had to make tough decisions as well as ending relationships with my therapist due to her not taking my current insurance. Healthcare coverage is so important due to health problems being on the rise thanks to Covid-19, and with health problems being on the rise, so are medical cost.

**I am urging you guys to:**

- Increase HUSKY A and D eligibility limits to 201% FPL so that lower income adults can access quality, affordable health care

- Create access to HUSKY programs for all income-eligible immigrants
- Remove the asset test added to the Medicaid Savings Program
- Restore cost of living increases for Connecticut's lowest income residents.

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. 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. This would allow me along with many families and individuals to benefit from Husky D. Lastly, some immigrants who have been in the U.S. for less than 5 years are not eligible for HUSKY health programs. This puts this vulnerable population at an even higher risk during this global pandemic. Latinos, along with African American residents have been three times as likely to become infected as their white neighbors. HUSKY Health programs are one part of larger efforts to make health care affordable for everyone. For people at lower income levels, it is the best option because it removes the barrier of deductibles and co-pays AND is matched by the federal government (50% of HUSKY costs for parents and adults without dependents over 138%FPL would be reimbursed by the federal government).

Thank you for your time,

Jesmar A. Suarez