UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE
Foundation *of* Connecticut

Testimony in Support of
House Bill 6740: An Act Concerning Hospital Financial Assistance Policies

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Chairs and members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 6740: An Act Concerning Hospital Financial Assistance Policies on behalf of Universal Healthcare Foundation of Connecticut.

Universal's mission is to accelerate the movement for health justice for everybody because health is a human right and core to social justice and equity. Our work is essential as it is at the intersection of the broader movement for social and economic justice.

Medical debt is a major contributor to the cycle of economic and health inequity. Racial inequities in income, wealth, and insurance coverage play a role in the prevalence and burden of medical debt. The most affected by increases of hospital costs are Black and Brown residents in Connecticut. In the state 7% of Black adults and 8% of Latinx adults had no health insurance compared to 3% of White adults. Black and Latinx residents are also more likely to have high deductible health plans due to a combination of various factors that stem from systemic racism such as inequity in employment and education opportunities.

These disparities are exacerbated by wealth inequities and the randomness of visits to the hospitals are considered. Emergency hospital visits can happen at any moment, and Black and Latinx people are less likely to have savings on hand to pay the large, unexpected bills like those that our community members get after a hospital visit.

Financial assistance policies like HB 6740 can help reduce the rate at which patients fall into medical debt and ensure that people eligible for assistance do not end up in collections.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 6740, an act concerning hospital financial assistance policies. I hope this committee votes in support fot this bill as well to support Connecticut residents with the cost of hospitals.

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