



**TESTIMONY OF  
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, February 14, 2023**

**HB 6616, An Act Concerning Expansion Of HUSKY Health Benefits  
To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning **HB 6616, An Act Concerning Expansion Of HUSKY Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status**. CHA supports this bill.

Connecticut hospitals continue to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and are now facing new challenges of treating sicker patients than they saw before the pandemic, with a dedicated but smaller workforce who are exemplary but exhausted. They are also experiencing significant financial hardships brought on by record inflation. Through it all, hospitals have been steadfast, providing high-quality care for everyone who walks through their doors, regardless of ability to pay.

HB 6616 raises the age limit on coverage for certain individuals who would qualify for HUSKY A, C or D, but for their immigration status, from twelve years of age and younger to twenty five years of age and younger. The bill also raises the age limit on coverage for children who would qualify for HUSKY B, except for their immigration status, and whose household income exceeds 201% of the federal poverty level but does not exceed 300% of the federal poverty level, from twelve years of age and younger to eighteen years of age and younger.

Many immigrants are at high risk of being uninsured because their immigration status affords them limited access to coverage options. Although some individuals are able to access employer-sponsored insurance for themselves and their children, such insurance is limited as a result of the high cost of coverage or health plans' unwillingness to process applications due to immigration status.

In addition, federal law precludes or limits coverage in many cases under Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Access Health CT's health insurance exchange.

As a result of this lack of coverage, many immigrants and their dependents have a great deal of difficulty accessing care. As is the case with other uninsured individuals, they may delay care or forego care entirely until their condition requires emergency department visits or hospitalizations. These services, which are avoidable if care is provided earlier, may ultimately be covered by Medicaid at significant taxpayer expense.

Lack of coverage for children and young adults as a result of immigration status affects long-term health and development. HB 6616 will positively influence the long-term health of these children and young adults.

We believe raising the age limit as proposed to include older children and young adults will substantially improve access to early and essential healthcare services.

Thank you for your consideration of our position. For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.