



Testimony Regarding S.B. 956: An Act Providing Medical Assistance to Certain Individuals Regardless of Immigration Status.

Karen Siegel, MPH
Human Services Committee
March 11, 2021

Dear Representative Abercrombie, Senator Moore, Senator Berthel, Representative Case, and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee,

My name is Karen Siegel and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Health Equity Solutions, where I serve as Director of Policy. Health Equity Solutions is a nonprofit organization with a statewide focus on promoting policies, programs, and practices that result in equitable health care access, delivery, and outcomes for all people in Connecticut. Our vision is for every Connecticut resident to attain optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

In order to address barriers to health care in Connecticut and ensure our policy priorities are community informed, Health Equity Solutions conducts annual listening sessions. Healthcare access was one of the top two health equity priorities identified by our partners for 2021.¹ As a result of these conversations and our analysis of the health equity impact of the proposals in this bill, **we support creating access to health insurance for undocumented immigrants.**

Access to health insurance is key to access to health care and people of color in Connecticut continue to experience dramatic inequities in rates of insurance coverage.² Many immigrants are ineligible for Medicaid based on their visa status and immigrants without documents are ineligible for Medicaid AND unable to purchase health insurance. Based on country-of-origin estimates, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of immigrants without documents living in Connecticut are people of color.³ An estimated 23% of uninsured people in Connecticut are immigrants without legal status.⁴ As a result, ensuring access to health insurance for all immigrants living in Connecticut is a crucial part of advancing health equity in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding S.B. 956. I can be reached with any questions at ksiegel@hesct.org or 860.937.6437.

¹ Health Equity Solutions. Health Equity Solutions 2020 Listening Sessions. Retrieved from: <https://www.hesct.org/blog/health-equity-solutions-2020-listening-sessions/>

²Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of 2019 American Community Survey data. Available at: <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/state-indicator/nonelderly-uninsured-rate-by-raceethnicity/?currentTimeframe=0&selectedRows=%7B%22states%22:%7B%22connecticut%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

³ Migration Policy Institute analysis of 2014-2018 U.S. Census Bureau data. Available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/authorized-immigrant-population/state/CT>

⁴ CT Health Foundation. (2020) "Health Disparities in CT." Retrieved from: <https://www.cthealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Health-disparities-in-Connecticut.pdf>