

April 13, 2020 (Updated and Revised)

The Honorable Ned Lamont
Governor, State of Connecticut
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Re: HUSKY Expansion to Undocumented Families

Dear Governor Lamont;

As front line healthcare providers, we are thankful for your swift and decisive leadership to direct medical care resources efficiently and effectively while enforcing measures that will undoubtedly save lives and "flatten the curve," reducing the burden of COVID-19 and protecting all who live in our state.

We are writing to request an additional urgent, life-saving measure that is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19:

Expand Husky A and B eligibility to all children and youth under 19 years of age and to their parents/guardians who would otherwise be eligible but for their immigration status.

This eligibility expansion is essential for the health of all undocumented immigrants as well as for public health and safety within our state. The need for all Connecticut's residents, regardless of immigration status, to have equitable and available access to health care has already been recognized by the [U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services \(USCIS\)](#):

"USCIS encourages all those, including aliens, with symptoms that resemble Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) (fever, cough, shortness of breath) to seek necessary medical treatment or preventive services. Such treatment or preventive services will not negatively affect any alien as part of a future Public Charge analysis."

Given the existing framework of our state's Medicaid system, how can undocumented immigrant children and their families seek health care without adequate coverage?

Without ready access to reliable healthcare, undocumented children and their families may feel uncomfortable or fearful about seeking medical care for their symptoms, and unintentionally spread COVID-19. They may seek care too late, and require higher levels of care which may add to the burden healthcare systems already overwhelmed by COVID-19.

Sadly, we have seen what happens during this pandemic when inaction and delay occur: COVID-19 infections rise, and cause higher rates of morbidity and mortality, especially to frontline medical providers and vulnerable populations.

A recent article in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) makes the case clearly:

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"The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) passed on March 18 provides coverage for Covid-19 testing for the uninsured through National Disaster Medical System reimbursements. This is welcome news but does not go far enough."

As of yesterday (April 12, 2020), over 12,000 Connecticut residents have tested positive for COVID-19 resulting in over 550 fatalities. As we noted before, without adequate access to health care, more Connecticut residents will succumb to COVID-19, spread the disease, and deplete our already-diminishing resource. Failure to expand health care access will risk not only their lives, but also ours as frontline healthcare workers.

Undocumented immigrant communities need access to HUSKY insurance immediately We urge you to take swift action to protect the health of all of Connecticut's Children and families.

PLEASE expand HUSKY A and B eligibility to all otherwise eligible children and youth under 19 years of age and their parents/guardians regardless of their immigration status. Doing so will save lives.

Sincerely,

cc: Deirdre Gifford, M.D., MPH – Department of Social Services
Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Jonathan Harris, Office of the Governor
Vicky Veltri, Office of Healthcare Strategy
The Honorable Andrew Mais, Commissioner Connecticut Insurance Department
The Honorable Renée D Coleman-Mitchell, Commissioner Department Public of Health
Sen. Martin Looney, Senate President Pro Tempore
Sen. Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader
Rep. Joe Aresimowicz, Speaker of the House
Rep. Matt Ritter, House Majority Leader
Sen. Marilyn Moore, Co-Chair Human Services Committee
Rep. Cathy Abercrombie, Co-Chair Human Services Comm.
Rep. Jonathan Steinberg, Co-Chair Public Health Committee
Sen. Mary Abrams, Co-Chair Public Health Committee
Sen. Matthew Lesser, Co-Chair Insurance Committee
Rep. Sean Scanlon, Co-Chair Insurance Committee

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Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity
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