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:
"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. 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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2. Andrea Asnes, MD, MSW
3. Hannah Rosenblum, MD Yale New Haven Hospital
4. Katherine Nash MD, Pediatrician, Yale University
5. Ralph Rosenberg MD
6. Jaclyn Portanova, PhD, MSG, RN, National Clinician Scholars Program, Yale
7. Emily Pinto Taylor, MD - Chief Resident, Internal Medicine, Yale New-Haven Hospital
8. Hilda Slivka MD
9. Frances Cheng, MD PhD, Yale School of Medicine
10. Michelle Salazar, MD - Yale School of Medicine
11. Jasmine L. Travers, PhD, RN
12. Cary P. Gross, MD, Professor of Medicine, Yale School of Medicine
13. Gretchen Berland, Associate Professor of Medicine, Yale
14. Elliott Miller, MD Yale
15. Eric J Brandt, MD - Yale School of Medicine
16. Louisa Holaday, MD, Yale University
17. Jake Rosenberg MD PhD
18. Jasmine Weiss, MD Yale School of Medicine
19. Shannon O'Malley, MD, Pediatrics at YNHH
20. Cherise Rowan, MD, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics Yale School of Medicine
21. Angela Martinez-Strengel, MD
22. Danice Kuruvilla, MD
23. Alexis Rudd, MD
24. Kathleen Felisca, MD, Yale-New Haven Medical Center
25. Magna Dias, MD; Chair of Pediatrics, Bridgeport Hospital
26. Henna Shaikh, MD
27. Joseph S. Ross, MD, MHS; Professor of Medicine and Public Health, Yale University
28. Nirali Butala, MD YNHH Pediatrics
29. Aaron Bennett MD, Yale Pediatrics
30. Hannah Fuson, MD, MS Yale Pediatrics
31. Heather Dahlquist, MD - Yale University Department of Pediatrics
32. Carl Malm, MD MPH, Yale-New Haven Hospital
33. Vicki K. Smetak, MD, Medical Director, Regional Strategy, Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital
34. Lyubina Yankova, MD, pediatrician
35. Adam Berkwitt, MD
36. Eunice DeFilippo MD Yale New Haven Hospital
37. Prisca Takundwa, MD
38. Katelyn Cusmano, MD
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40. Chelsea Hartman, MD, Yale Pediatrics
41. Brielle Stanton, MD. Yale New Haven Hospital
42. Rachel Johnson, MD, Resident physician in pediatrics at Yale New Haven Hospital
43. Kristin Reese, MD, Yale New Haven Children's Hospital
44. Sharon R. Smith, MD; CT Children's Medical Center
45. Christine Skurkis, MD
46. Rahul Shah, MD
47. Andrew Oliver, MD - Yale Pediatrics Resident
48. Patricia Nogelo, LCSW
49. Benjamin A. Howell, MD, MPH, MHS; National Clinician Scholars Program, Yale School of Medicine
50. Heather A. Riggio - Fellowship & Residency Coordinator for Pediatrics at Yale
51. Juan Vasquez, MD, Yale Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
52. Stephanie Massaro, MD, MPH
53. Sarah N. Taylor, MD, MSCR, Associate Professor in Yale Department of Pediatrics
54. David Frumberg, MD, Yale Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation, Yale Pediatrics
55. Nina Kadan-Lottick, MD Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Yale
56. Eugene D. Shapiro, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Yale School of Medicine
57. Ada Fenick, MD; Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Yale School of Medicine
58. Tanya Murtha, MD, MPH
59. Lyn M Balsamo, PhD; Yale University School of Medicine
60. Deepa R. Camenga, MD MHS Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine and Pediatrics, Yale School of Medicine
61. Saria Hassan, MD, Faculty Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, Yale School of Medicine
62. Jordan Silberg, MD, Yale New Haven Children's Hospital
63. James Leckman, MD, PhD, Professor Yale Child Study Center
64. Charles C Duncan MD, Professor of Neurosurgery, Pediatrics and Surgery (Anatomy), Yale University
65. Jose Panisello, MD, Medical Director, Pediatric Critical Care, Yale-New Haven Hospital
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68. Kathleen Jo Corbin, MD, MHS; Yale University School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics
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71. Kirsten Bechtel MD Yale School of Medicine
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74. Laura Nally, MD, FAAP, Pediatric Endocrinologist at Yale University
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233.  Evelyn LeSage-Tineo