



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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Testimony on
*H.B. 7040 "An Act Implementing the
Governor's Budget Recommendations for Human Services"*
Opposed to HUSKY Eligibility Changes
Before the Human Services Committee
March 2, 2017

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference, the public policy office of Connecticut's Catholic Bishops, opposes the reduction of HUSKY eligibility requirements for parents as outlined in the most currently proposed Governor's Budget. This proposal would reduce the current federal poverty level eligibility standard from 155 percent to 138 percent. It is currently estimated that 9,500 parents would lose their existing health insurance coverage. This proposal conflicts with our national and state efforts to eventually provide everyone with affordable, quality healthcare and it fails to recognize what is rapidly becoming viewed as a basic human right in our nation. That is, access to quality health care is the common good that all people should have.

This premise holds that many of the parents losing coverage would apply for subsidized coverage under Access Health CT, our state's health insurance exchange. However, when Connecticut previously lowered its eligibility percentage, data shows that approximately 7,000 parents lost coverage and did not enroll in Access Health CT. Even with subsidized premiums on the Exchange, low-income parents may still find making these payments difficult. Additionally, the extremely high deductibles and co-pays of the policies available on the Exchange make these payments unsuited for low-income families. Many of these families probably realized that even if they could afford the premiums, they would not be able to fully utilize the policy benefits.

Moreover, discussions at the federal level about eliminating or restructuring the Affordable Care Act make this legislative proposal to eliminate people from HUSKY coverage a very risky proposition at this time. Depending on those changes, parents in this group who are losing eligibility could find themselves unable to obtain coverage. The Committee should remember one of the basic reasons HUSKY coverage for parents was instituted; i.e., studies showed that children with insured parents experienced better and more frequent health care encounters.

Accordingly, the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference urges the Human Services Committee to oppose any change in HUSKY eligibility requirements for parents contained in the Governor's Budget.

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