

Why Expand to Age 26?

The current situation: a health equity issue

- **Undocumented immigrants are much more likely to be without health insurance** – in 2019, 58% of the roughly 113,000 undocumented immigrants in CT do not have any form of health insurance coverage (compared to 95% of the general CT population who had health insurance).
 - This is a **huge health disparity** that can be addressed by expanding HUSKY coverage to age 26.
- **Some immigrants are barred from health insurance**
 - Undocumented immigrants (who are not ages 0-12 or pregnant) are **excluded** from HUSKY (Medicaid/CHIP), Medicare, Access Health CT state exchange coverage and financial help, and private insurance coverage.
 - Adult immigrants with “Legally Present Resident” (LPR) status in the US less than 5 years are also **excluded** from HUSKY. Although they are able to purchase coverage on Access Health CT with financial help, this does not help low-income people who can’t afford the out of pocket costs like copays.

Connecticut can afford it (and can’t afford not to)

- It would cost **roughly \$18.4 million annually to expand coverage to 13 to 25 year olds** (up to age 26).
- Roughly **5,000** young people would now have health insurance coverage they didn’t have before
- There would be a **decline in state spending on the emergency Medicaid program**. The state spent **\$15 million** on emergency Medicaid in 2021.
- Undocumented immigrants support Connecticut’s economy. They paid \$338.3 Million in federal and \$187.5 Million in state and local taxes in 2019, for a total of over half a billion dollars (\$525.8 Million).

It’s popular among voters, health care providers, and the general public

- Expanding HUSKY to undocumented immigrants is **NOT a controversial issue** and is **supported by a majority of CT voters!**
 - **A solid majority of voters** support expanding access to HUSKY health care coverage **to all people** who qualify by income in Connecticut, regardless of immigration status. 57% of voters support expanding HUSKY to ALL undocumented immigrants - - including 84% of Democrats, 83% of Black voters and 76% of Latinx voters.
- Over **350 providers** signed on in support in 2022
- The past few years have seen an **outpouring of support at public hearings** for extending HUSKY to undocumented communities.
 - At the recent public hearing for HB 6616 (which expands HUSKY to age 26, regardless of status), 130 people spoke in support, and over 703 supportive written testimonies were submitted.
 - In 2022, a similar bill received 200+ live testimonies of health care providers, immigrants, and organizations and 360+ written testimonies submitted in support.
 - The 2021 public hearing had similar numbers.

- With more attention and building momentum on this issue, we expect such public support to further increase.

Benefits to our health care system

- Much of the federal funds that are being used to cover care for the uninsured can be freed up to expand services to everyone including behavioral health, primary and preventive care, dental services, etc. We don't want people to have to resort to emergency services as their main source of primary care.
- There would be a **decline in hospital spending on uncompensated care** for undocumented and legally present recent immigrants.