

NEWS RELEASE
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Health Advocates Call for Maintaining HUSKY Coverage for Parents in Response to Research About Impact of Cuts

*Thousands of Parents Estimated to Lose Coverage
Due to High Costs in Governor's Proposed Plan*

In response to a new research report estimating that Governor Malloy's proposed HUSKY health care cuts would result in thousands more uninsured parents, health advocacy groups called on the Governor and state legislators to maintain current HUSKY eligibility levels for parents enrolled in the program.

The Governor has proposed eliminating HUSKY eligibility for parents whose income ranges from 133% to 185% of the federal poverty level, or \$25,975 to \$36,131 for a family of three. These parents would be expected to purchase private health coverage through the health insurance Exchange established under federal health reform. The report, prepared by researchers at the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Health Law and Economics on behalf of the Connecticut Health Foundation, estimated that 7,500 to 11,000 currently-insured parents in HUSKY would go without health coverage as a result of unaffordable premiums and co-payments that would be required of these low-income parents in the Exchange.

The Legal Assistance Resource Center and Connecticut Voices for Children called on the Governor and state legislators to maintain the current eligibility rules for parents, which have been in place since 2007.

"The goal of federal health reform is to expand access to health coverage for families," said Sharon Langer, Interim Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children. "The Governor's proposal for parents would take us backward, making thousands more parents uninsured. In addition, making health coverage inaccessible for parents means their children are less likely to be covered."

"Many of the parents who would lose health care as a result of this change are working at low-wage jobs and don't have access to affordable health care from their employers. This change would

destabilize families who are struggling to meet their basic needs already,” said Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut.

"I can't imagine how we would get by without HUSKY health coverage," said Patrina Thompson, an East Hartford parent enrolled in HUSKY, along with her child. "We just could not afford to purchase insurance through the Exchange. Even with subsidies, the premiums would be too high, and we are struggling to cover basic living expenses."

"HUSKY has been a lifeline that has helped us to get the affordable health care we need," commented Traci Edwards, a Jewett City parent enrolled in HUSKY. "After rent, utilities, food, and other costs, we just don't have room left for new health care premiums and co-payments."

The organizations also pointed out that cutting HUSKY is an ineffective way to reduce state expenses, since the federal government reimburses Connecticut for half of the costs of the program. Thus, Connecticut has to make two dollars in cuts to HUSKY to save one dollar of state funds.

The report, "Consequences of Proposed Eligibility Reduction of HUSKY A Parents," is available on the Connecticut Health Foundation website at www.cthealth.org.

The Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut (LARCC) is the policy advocacy and public education branch of the major Legal Services programs in the state and advocates for policies which benefit low-income people (www.larcc.org). Connecticut Voices for Children is a research-based policy think tank that works to advance policies that benefit the state's children, youth and families (ctvoices.org).

Reporters: To speak with parents who are enrolled in HUSKY and willing to speak to news media, please contact Jane McNichol at the Legal Assistance Resource Center. These parents reside in East Hartford, Manchester, Torrington, Norwich, and Jewett City.

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