



# News Release

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## **Proposed Changes to Medicaid Eligibility put Low-Income Families At Risk of Losing Basic Health Coverage**

**NEW HAVEN, CONN.** - In 2015, the State of Connecticut cut income eligibility for parents and relative caregivers of children in the HUSKY program from 201 percent of the federal poverty limit (FPL) to 155 percent FPL, affecting nearly 18,000 parents scheduled to lose coverage August 1, 2016. A new report from Connecticut Voices for Children indicates that cutting eligibility will jeopardize access to affordable insurance coverage for low-income families.

“Cutting HUSKY income eligibility for parents is a big step backward in Connecticut’s long-standing commitment to covering low-income families,” said Sharon Langer, advocacy director for Connecticut Voices. “In addition, experience in other states suggests that *eligible* children in affected families are at risk for losing coverage when their parents do,” she said.

Throughout the budget process last year, the state emphasized that affordable health care coverage through Access Health CT, the state’s health insurance marketplace, is available for parents who lose Medicaid coverage. However, among those who lost coverage immediately following last year’s cuts, just one in four enrolled in a qualified health plan through Access Health CT. Most parents in this group (73.5 percent) did not enroll or have since dropped coverage and may be uninsured.

Even with federal subsidies for premiums and limits on out-of-pocket costs, coverage in a qualified health plan can be very costly for low-income families. For example, a family with two parents and two children earning \$48,843 could be billed as much as \$13,676 (28 percent of household income) for its health coverage. In addition, dental health insurance for adults is a separate purchase, without premium subsidies and with significant out-of-pocket costs for limited coverage.

Governor Malloy’s April 2016 revised budget proposal would reduce the HUSKY income limit further to 138 percent FPL (e.g., \$33,534 for a family of four). “Reducing income eligibility for almost 10,000 low-income parents, as the governor has proposed in his Fiscal Year 2017 budget, will happen before we know the full impact of last year’s cuts,” said Mary Alice Lee, senior policy fellow for Connecticut Voices. In sum, almost 30,000 low-income families are at risk of losing access to basic health coverage as a result of the enacted and proposed changes to Medicaid eligibility.

**See full report here:** <http://www.ctvoices.org/publications/husky-program-coverage-parents-most-families-will-feel-full-impact-income-eligibility-c>

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Connecticut Voices for Children is a statewide, research and policy organization that works at the state and federal levels to advance public policies that benefit the state's children, youth and families. For more information on Connecticut Voices, see [www.ctvoices.org](http://www.ctvoices.org)