



Testimony

HB 6382

An Act Concerning the Eligibility to Purchase a Health Benefit Plan Offered by the CT Health Insurance Exchange

**Insurance and Real Estate Committee
February 14, 2013**

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Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut**

Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut is an independent non-profit foundation dedicated to achieving access to high quality, affordable health care for everyone in our state. We oppose HB 6382 as an unnecessary piece of legislation that precludes consideration of a Basic Health Program (BHP) before federal guidance has been received.

The Basic Health Plan Work Group was convened under the auspices of the Health Care Cabinet to explore the implications of implementing the BHP in Connecticut. The Work Group concluded that it could not make a final recommendation until federal guidance on the BHP is issued and should reconvene as soon as guidance is received. In the meantime, the Work Group recommended that data should be collected on Exchange enrollment trends for the population the BHP would serve, those between 133% FPL and 200% FPL.

Our foundation has been a strong supporter of the BHP as a possible way to make coverage affordable to low income people in Connecticut. We continue to be concerned that many people in this income bracket will be unable to cover the cost of premiums, deductibles and co-pays, even with the subsidies that will be provided. The maximum out-of-pocket costs for an individual between 133% and 200% FPL will be \$2,250, according to the draft standard plan found on the Exchange website. An individual at 150% FPL makes \$17,235 a year and cannot afford to pay up to 13% of his or her income on health care, given the high cost of housing, food, utilities and transportation in Connecticut.

People in this income bracket, who work hard for a living but are barely getting by, need access to comprehensive, affordable health care coverage. Without the BHP, a large proportion of them are likely to have no choice but to remain uninsured. The cost of living in Connecticut is too high and the actuarial value of plans will be too low. Language regarding evaluating implementation of the BHP should not be removed from Connecticut law before federal BHP guidance has been received and the BHP Work Group has had a chance to study its impact.