



For Immediate Release

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**Universal Health Care Foundation Statement
On Failed Health Care Reform Legislation in the 2021 Session**

Statement of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut president, Frances G. Padilla, on The Public Options Bill.

“In the throes of a global pandemic, Universal Health Care Foundation of CT came together with key allies and legislative champions to pass a bold public options bill this session. Now, more than ever, the deep flaws in our health care system are exposed. Sadly, several lawmakers showed their true colors: they chose to stand with big insurance industry interests over state residents, even though polls show 92% of residents want the government to expand health care options.

COVID-19 has left hundreds of thousands of residents in an economic and personal crisis. It’s astounding that five insurers have been able to hold the state’s lawmakers hostage. While they celebrated bonuses and record quarters, 1 out of 4 CT residents avoided seeing their doctor or having a procedure done because of prohibitive costs.

Residents need relief from relentless health care bills. And they need better options for quality health coverage. The Governor points to the American Rescue Plan as a solution, but he knows just as well as we do that this is only a temporary and inadequate fix to persistent and systemic problems with access to quality, affordable health care in Connecticut.

The American Rescue Plan will not help small businesses or nonprofits the way a robust public option would. By offering them new choices for affordable, dependable coverage, their employees would benefit from the size and negotiating power of the state employee health plan. Instead, the Governor has the backs of insurance CEOs and lobbyists, rather than the backs of small businesses.

While lowering premiums for Access Health CT plans, the American Rescue Plan has does not lower deductibles and copays so those who purchase coverage can actually afford to use it. It does nothing to expand HUSKY eligibility for low income parents or for hard working immigrants who struggle to afford any health care.

This fight doesn’t end here. We expect that in the wake of COVID-19, legislators will enact legislation to expand health care options to more people in our state, including: expanding HUSKY eligibility, increasing cost-sharing subsidies, and opening up HUSKY to undocumented immigrants.”

Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut’s mission is to serve as a catalyst that engages residents and communities in shaping a democratic health system that provides universal access to quality, affordable, equitable health care and promotes health in Connecticut. We believe that health care is a fundamental right and that our work is part of a broader movement for social and economic justice.