



For Immediate Release

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For more info, contact: Frances Padilla – 203-668-1063

**Universal Health Care Foundation Statement
On Failed Health Care Reform Legislation in the 2019 Session**

Statement of Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut president, Frances G. Padilla, on the failure of HB 7267, An Act Concerning Public Options for Health Care in Connecticut, to pass.

“The foundation, with key allies and legislative champions, worked to pass a bold public option bill this session – and these efforts were blocked at every turn by vested interests who prefer the status quo to offering residents access to quality, affordable health care choices.

Our goal was to offer meaningful relief to small businesses and the more than 500,000 people who work for them. They are the backbone of the state’s economy and they need help. Many small business owners cannot afford health coverage for themselves or their employees, and those who do buy coverage struggle with ever-rising premiums, co-pays and deductibles.

First, the public option provisions, which would have made better insurance choices available to more people, were stripped from the bill. The insurance lobby threw its weight around and won – facing meaningful competition was just too much for them.

Despite removal of the public option, important reforms to help tackle costs and expand coverage remained: allowing importation of prescription drugs from Canada; and establishing a new process for limiting cost increases by hospitals and other industry players. These measures would have made a real difference for many. But they, too, fell victim to powerful interests.

A key piece of the original bill did make it over the finish line: HUSKY A eligibility for low-income parents and caregivers has been partially restored in the budget. This means that approximately 4,000 people will be able to rejoin HUSKY, after having lost their coverage from 2015 budget cuts.

We will continue to push for pro-consumer, accountability, affordability and quality in the state’s health insurance market. The people of this state deserve better choices.

We want to recognize the tireless efforts of the bill’s champions, Comptroller Kevin Lembo, Senator Matt Lesser and Representative Sean Scanlon. They have shown vision and leadership on this issue and have been great partners.”

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.