

Testimony to the Public Health Committee Public Hearing
Submitted by Maria Blanco, Stamford, CT
In support of the Basic Health Program
March 21, 2012

I am a small business owner, running a cleaning service in Stamford. I do not have health insurance because it is too expensive.

In September 2011, after bearing several days of excruciating abdominal pain, I had to go the Emergency Department at Stamford Hospital, where they immediately detected that my appendix had burst and I had peritonitis. There was NO choice but to do emergency surgery. When the doctors asked why had I waited so long, I informed them that I had NO health insurance. I could not afford to go for preventative care because it simply costs too much money. The doctors explained that had I waited a little longer I could have died due to the complications.

After being in the hospital for a period of ten (10) days, I was thrilled to be back home and alive. Unfortunately, that feeling only lasted a little while. A week later, I began to receive medical bills from the hospital. The first bill I received was for \$6,000. Then the next one came in for \$3,000, then another for \$8,000. By the time I received all the bills, they totaled a little over \$69,000. When I realized how much I was in debt with the hospital, I wanted to die.

When I was discharged from the hospital all that was given to me was a tiny piece of paper with two telephone numbers on it for my post-op appointment. Since the doctor told me to follow up, I did so, assuming that I would have my post-op appointment at the hospital/clinic. Instead the numbers he gave me were to his PRIVATE office which clearly is a lot more expensive than going back to the hospital/clinic. My debt continued to increase...

I ask myself, who protects us the patients, the consumers? How will I be able to pay this huge hospital debt? Apply for State assistance? File bankruptcy? I worry everyday that I will get sick again.

When should I expect real health care reform to be available to people like myself and thousands of others like me? I strongly support implementing the Basic Health Program. The Basic Health Program would give me good quality and affordable health coverage that I need. Please act NOW, tomorrow may be a day too late for thousands in CT.

Cordially,

Maria Blanco
9 Walance Street
Stamford, CT 06902