

March 11, 2018

To: VT Senate Finance Committee

VT Senate Appropriations Committee

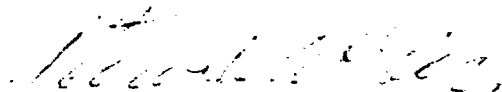
Dear Senator,

I am a retired family physician who practiced in Berlin for 37 years, and I currently work part-time in a substance abuse clinic. I request that you give careful consideration to S53, "An act relating to universal, publicly financed primary care" in Vermont. In my family practice, I encountered too many instances of harm to patients due to delay in diagnosis or treatment because of exorbitant out-of-pocket cost for primary care services. Too often, patients with no or high-deductible health insurance would avoid simple preventive or early diagnostic interventions and present with complications of untreated hypertension, advanced cancer, or life-threatening pneumonia, to give a few examples. There are principles of prevention, health maintenance, disease screening and early intervention that apply to all people of all ages. Cost should not be a barrier to these essential services.

It has been well shown that directing funding and personnel to primary care services has a higher impact on the overall health of a population than applying similar resources to secondary and tertiary care. Vermont has come a long way in improving health care insurance and access for its citizens, but there are still too many of our people who are uninsured or under-insured. Until we can find a way to establish comprehensive Medicare For All, let us please provide universal primary care that is not dependent on insurance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stuart Williams".

Stuart Williams, MD

796 North St, Montpelier, VT, 05602

802-223-5307