

# Dr. Dynasaur Expansion Proposal

- **Low-income undocumented Vermonters cannot access adequate health care.**
- **We propose expanding Dr. Dynasaur coverage to income-eligible children and pregnancy care for Vermonters regardless of immigration status.**
  - Undocumented immigrants face barriers in accessing care because they cannot enroll in affordable health insurance. Many avoid or delay needed care.<sup>i</sup>
  - Undocumented Vermonters are currently locked out of Vermont Medicaid.<sup>ii</sup>
  - They are also ineligible to purchase a Qualified Health Plan with subsidies through Vermont Health Connect.<sup>iii</sup>
  - Financial supports are limited to Patient Financial Assistance and Emergency Medicaid.
  - Emergency Medicaid only covers sudden onset medical conditions. For example, it could cover labor and delivery but does not cover pre-natal or post-natal care.
  - The application process for Emergency Medicaid is complicated. This has contributed to the underutilization of this benefit.

Vermont's healthcare system does not provide a reasonable path for low-income undocumented residents to obtain health coverage. This prevents this population from getting the care they need. Due to legal and financial barriers, undocumented Vermonters do not have access to preventative or ongoing care which inevitably results in more acute needs. Under our current system, when these children and pregnant Vermonters do get care, the costs are often ultimately shifted to ratepayers.

We must take action to address the racial disparities in our systems of care. Increasing access to health care for low-income undocumented Vermonters would address one area of structural racism in our system. We have a special duty to provide this minimal level of support to our fellow Vermonters who are living and working here.

## State Programs

- At least 16 states provide prenatal care to women regardless of immigration status<sup>iv</sup>
- California provides state-funded Medi-Cal coverage to income-eligible undocumented immigrants up to age 25<sup>v</sup>.

## Federal Law

- Under the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Vermont has the flexibility to expand Dr. Dynasaur coverage to include prenatal care to income eligible pregnant women regardless of their immigration status.<sup>vi</sup>

## Coalition Organizations

The organizations listed below support this policy proposal:

Health Care Advocate, ACLU of Vermont, Bi State Primary Care Association, Migrant Justice / Justicia Migrante, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, Vermont's Free & Referral Clinics, Vermont Immigrant Assistance Project, Vermont Interfaith Action, Vermont Medical Society, Vermont Workers Center, Open Door Clinic, ACLU Vermont

Bridges to Health & Huertas - Due to association with parent organization Bridges to Health can't advocate for the passage of a bill but has played an invaluable role in helping us understand the population who would be impacted.

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<sup>i</sup> KFF.org, *Health Coverage and Care of Undocumented Immigrants*, Jul 15, 2019. <https://www.kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/health-coverage-and-care-of-undocumented-immigrants/>

<sup>ii</sup> Vermont Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment, Rule 17.02

<sup>iii</sup> Vermont Health Benefits Eligibility and Enrollment, Rule 17.02

<sup>iv</sup> KFF.org, *Health Coverage and Care of Undocumented Immigrants*, Jul 15, 2019. <https://www.kff.org/disparities-policy/issue-brief/health-coverage-and-care-of-undocumented-immigrants/>

<sup>v</sup> NPR, *California Is 1st State To Offer Health Benefits To Adult Undocumented Immigrants*, July 10, 2019. <https://www.npr.org/2019/07/10/740147546/california-first-state-to-offer-health-benefits-to-adult-undocumented-immigrants>.

<sup>vi</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. State Children's Health Insurance Program. Eligibility for prenatal care and other health services for unborn children; Final Rule 42 CFR 457. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2002/10/02/02-24856/state-childrens-health-insurance-program-eligibility-for-prenatal-care-and-other-health-services-for>