

April 29 Universal Primary Care Hearing

Good evening. I'm Shasta Fowler and I live in Montpelier. I'm a member of the Vermont Workers' Center and the Vermont Nonviolent Medicaid Army. I'm a mom to a three year old and I work part time as a Direct Support Professional working with adults with Developmental Disabilities.

It is imperative that every Vermonter has access to routine medical care. Universal Primary Care creates an equitable system where no one falls off the benefits cliff, no one delays care. I'm currently ineligible for healthcare benefits through my employer.

My primary care office was closed permanently last year to expand one of the specialties at Central Vermont Medical Center, and my Primary Care Provider left the area as a result. This was a provider I'd been seeing for over 5 years. Without an assigned provider my lab results were left floating in space, leading to a follow-up appointment with an interim provider that was a waste of time and resources. The lack of care led me to file a formal complaint. My conclusion from this experience is that primary care is not a priority to the UVM Health Network. We cannot allow hospitals and insurers to play Monopoly with our lives.

Limiting access to Primary Care goes against the legislative policies currently in place, and funding universal primary care is a good start. But it is only a start. Act 48, our universal healthcare law in place since 2011 needs to be equitably financed—and soon!--so we have a healthcare system where everyone is in and no one is left behind. We've been stalled for fifteen years. We've delayed care to our system, all the while spending money on remedies that did nothing but waste time and money.

As a voter, mom, and caregiver I demand a course correction in how we fund our healthcare system - fulfill the promise of Act 48.