

Dear House Health Care Committee members:

On April 23 I testified in your committee and suggested language for S.197 that would take a small, but essential step toward ensuring that all Vermonters have access to primary care. Now I feel like time is wasting. The bill has been in your committee for over six weeks, and still no mark-up. I can't understand that. Especially when the affordability crisis in health care is rapidly worsening (employers and individuals dropping coverage, looming Medicaid cuts, and property tax increases driven by health care costs). Greater numbers of uninsured and underinsured also mean increased financial strain on hospitals and clinics. You heard testimony that the market is nearing collapse. So please, please prioritize S.197 and make it into something that is more than a collection of reports and a little boost to the questionable Blueprint program. Passing S.197 as is, without a House amendment, means that Vermonters will wait another year and will perceive the legislature as unresponsive. Your committee has the power to move us forward, and my sense is that the great majority of voters will wholeheartedly applaud you should you decide, even at this late hour, to put some substance in the bill.

Thanking you in advance,
Ethan Parke