



Testimony in Support of S.B. 10, An Act Promoting Access To Affordable Prescription Drugs, Health Care Coverage, Transparency in Health Care Costs, Home and Community-Based Support For Vulnerable Persons And Rights Regarding Gender Identity And Expression.
Human Services Committee

March 9, 2023

**Mendi Blue Paca,
President & CEO, Fairfield County's Community Foundation**

Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and esteemed members of the Human Services Committee, Fairfield County's Community Foundation is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **S.B. 10, An Act Promoting Access To Affordable Prescription Drugs, Health Care Coverage, Transparency in Health Care Costs, Home and Community-Based Support For Vulnerable Persons And Rights Regarding Gender Identity And Expression.**

Fairfield County's Community Foundation serves the 23 towns and cities in Fairfield County. We work closely with community organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and philanthropists to address challenges and identify opportunities to create a Fairfield County where everyone has an equitable opportunity to thrive. Informed by three decades of partnering with and serving our community, we have awarded over \$390 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond.

The Foundation is centering our investments on creating systemic and structural change in health, education, housing, and income and asset building to achieve greater racial equity and create a stronger, more thriving region.

Our newest signature investment, the emme coalition, is a research-driven collaboration with Optimus Health Care. It takes a holistic approach to address the barriers that prevent women and girls from receiving quality healthcare and reaching their full potential. **Community Health Care workers** are at the heart of this program and are trusted confidants, and on-call support systems for the women and girls enrolled in emme. The program provides direct services to 100 women and indirect services to 1,000 more in the Greater Bridgeport region.

Connecticut's Medicaid program does not reimburse Community Health Workers' (CHW) services or incentivize healthcare providers to work with CHWs. Yet, as demonstrated by the emme coalition, Community Health Workers are an effective way to address inequities and promote health, particularly for low-income households served by Medicaid. Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers should:

- Center community and CHW voices in all stages of design and implementation
- Reimburse at rates high enough to employ CHWs at a livable wage and cover the costs of supervision, billing, and routine training
- Cover a comprehensive list of CHW services

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **Testimony in Support of S.B. 10, An Act Promoting Access To Affordable Prescription Drugs, Health Care Coverage, Transparency in Health Care Costs, Home and Community-Based Support For Vulnerable Persons And Rights Regarding Gender Identity And Expression**

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Lutonya Russell-Humes, VP of Grants and Programs, at russell-humes@fccfoundation.org or 203-750-3223.