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Astrid Lopez

High Deductible Health Plan Taskforce

My name is Astrid Lopez. I work for Whole Life Inc. in the Bridgeport area. I have worked at Whole life as direct support staff for 20 years. I've been working in the group home industry for 27 years.

I have been uninsured for over three years. Between my husband and I, we don't qualify for State insurance. On the other hand, the health insurance plan offered by my employer cost roughly \$380 a month, which I can't afford. Furthermore, the deductible is \$3,000 a year for the individual plan and \$6,000 a year for the family plan. This effectively makes this plan too expensive to use, making me virtually uninsured. Like anyone, I have essential bills to pay and because of the high cost of health insurance, my husband and I are forced to choose between putting a roof over our head and insuring ourselves. Every day I live in fear that a medical emergency will arise and we will be unable to handle it financially.

Every day I suffer from sciatica. I was seeing a chiropractor for this but recently was forced to stop because I could no longer afford it. My visits were three times a week, \$40 each visit. To truly address my condition, I would need CT scans and X-Rays, but these procedures are simply out of the question – I cannot afford them. In addition to my sciatica, I also have a tear in my rotator cuff, which requires surgery to address. Day in and day out I suffer with aches and pains, and some nights it's hard to sleep at all.

It saddens me that I am a healthcare worker and I can't afford healthcare. There are days when I go to work with bad pains and I have to suppress it to get my job done. I love the individuals I care for and want to give them the best care possible. I wish I could provide the same care for myself, but I simply can't afford to.

It is time Connecticut took real action to ensure everyone has access to truly affordable healthcare!