



# Governor Ned Lamont

## Fact Sheet: 2026 Legislative Proposal

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### HOUSE BILL 5041

#### *AN ACT EXPANDING HEALTHCARE COVERAGE*

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### **The Current Situation**

Health care is unaffordable in Connecticut, making it difficult for residents to access necessary treatments and services. In 2025, Connecticut ranked as the 5<sup>th</sup> most unaffordable state for health care costs, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest insurance coverage costs and the 4<sup>th</sup> highest annual premiums for individual coverage nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

Recent survey data highlights the severity of this problem. A 2025 HealthCare Value Hub survey found that 64% of Connecticut respondents experienced at least one health care affordability burden, and 61% delayed or avoided care due to cost in the previous year.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 23% of CT residents find themselves rationing or avoiding prescribed drugs each year due to unaffordable prices<sup>3</sup>—a problem intensified by misaligned incentives and practices that do not help patients access the most affordable, cost-effective treatment.

Affordability challenges are expected to worsen in the coming years with the expiration of enhanced federal health insurance subsidies. Without state action, many families will face sharp premium increases, placing coverage and access to care further out of reach for thousands of Connecticut residents.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.consumeraffairs.com/insurance/most-and-least-expensive-states-for-health-care.html#most-expensive-states-for-health-care>

<sup>2</sup> <https://healthcarevaluehub.org/chess-state-survey/connecticut/2025/connecticut-survey-respondents-struggle-to-afford-high-health-care-costs-worry-about-affording-health-care-in-the-future-express-bipartisan-support-for-policy-solutions/https://hmi.healthcostinstitute.org/#HMI-Summary-Report-Current-Spending>

<sup>3</sup> <https://healthcarevaluehub.org/chess-state-survey/connecticut/2025/connecticut-survey-respondents-worry-about-high-drug-costs-express-bipartisan-support-for-policy-solutions/>



In addition to the actions recently taken to protect Access Health CT enrollees from the devastating impact of federal funding cuts, Connecticut must take decisive action to implement sustainable solutions that address rising health care costs and safeguard residents' access to affordable care.

### **Governor Lamont's Solution**

Establish a pathway for the "Connecticut Option," a publicly-designed and privately-administered health plan program. Necessary funding would allow the Governor to conduct planning and policy design, a feasibility assessment, and exploration of opportunities to maximize federal funding to reduce premiums and overall healthcare costs for consumers through a new Connecticut Option plan.

Sustain zero-premium coverage through Covered CT by adding statutory flexibilities to modify the program. The State can then secure federal approval to renew the program in 2028, align with required changes in Medicaid, enhance participation in the program, and maintain its long-term sustainability.

Create portable benefits accounts that ensure continuity of benefits for independent workers between jobs and enable companies to contribute to health insurance on the workers' behalf.

Establish a limited tax credit for small businesses that administer independent coverage health reimbursement arrangements (ICHRA) of up to \$1,000 per covered employee per year under the *BusinessPlus* program, promoting affordability and expanding employee health plan options.

Require health plans to add low-cost generic alternatives to covered brand-name drugs to their formularies when they enter the market, avoiding delays in generic drug coverage that unnecessarily keep costs higher for consumers and the state.