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**Testimony Re: Executive Office of Health and Human Services Budget
Senate Finance Committee**

April 11, 2018

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director

Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is here to provide informational testimony regarding the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) budget.

Rhode Island's Strong Commitment to Children's Coverage

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to thank this committee and members of the General Assembly for their continued leadership on ensuring all Rhode Island children have access to high-quality, affordable health and dental coverage. Rhode Island policy makers have long recognized that children with coverage are healthier, are more likely to receive preventive care, be screened for the achievement of developmental milestones, miss fewer days of school, and get treatment for illnesses and chronic conditions. You have also paid attention to the fact that providing preventive primary care rather than costly emergency care has been cost-effective. As a result of a sustained and strong commitment to children's coverage, 98.1% of Rhode Island children under age 18 were insured in 2016. Rhode Island ranks 3rd best in the U.S. on this measure.¹

Children Without Health Insurance, Rhode Island, 2010-2016

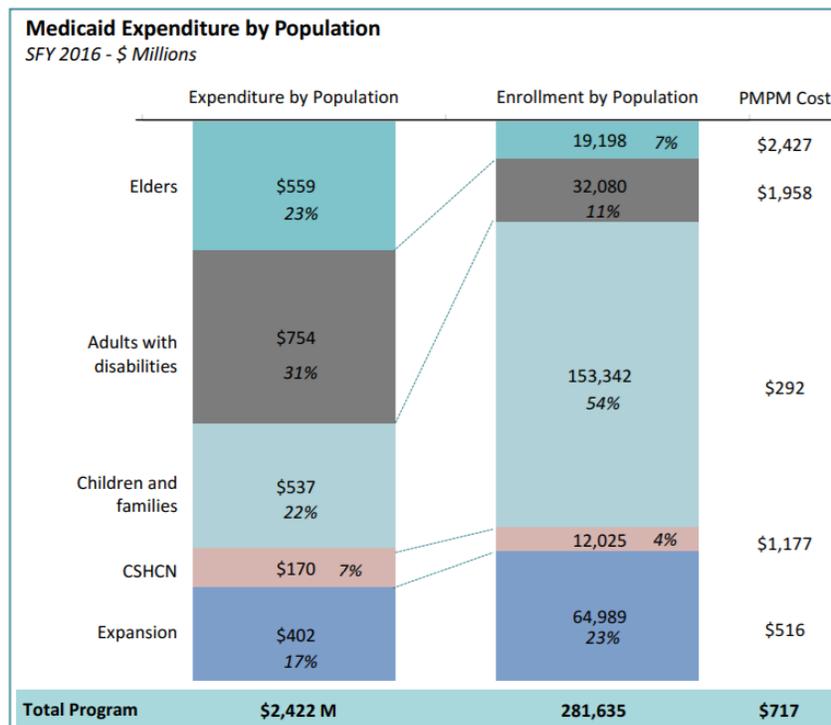


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014 & 2016. Table CP03. Data are for children under 18 years of age and are not comparable to Factbooks prior to 2015.

RItE Care is a Success

Rhode Island's high rate of children's health insurance coverage has been largely attributed to the RItE Care program, which is Rhode Island's Medicaid managed care program for children, pregnant women, and parents. In 2015, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recognized RItE Care as the best in the nation on a variety of quality services, including prenatal care, access to primary care, immunization status, as well as child and adolescent well visits.²

- Rlte Care Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) are regularly ranked among the best Medicaid MCO plans in the country** by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. In 2016, Rhode Island's then two Rlte Care MCO's, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (NHPRI) and United Healthcare, were two of the 11 children's Medicaid Managed Care plans that achieved a 4.5/5.0 or higher quality ranking in the nation.³ In 2017, CMS recognized Rlte Care as a top performing program on a variety of quality services, including maternal and perinatal health and primary care access and preventive health.⁴
- Rlte Care MCOs met 90th Percentile on important access indicators in 2017⁵**
 - Timely prenatal care
 - Frequency of on-going prenatal care
 - Infant well-child visits in first 15 months of life (6+ visits)
 - Adolescent well-care visits with PCP or OB/GYN (12-21 years)
 - Developmental screening in the first 3 years of life
 - Immunizations for children by age two
 - Child Body Mass Index (BMI) percentile accessed
- Rlte Care continues to be cost-efficient, high-quality coverage:** According to the latest *Medicaid Expenditure Report* released by the EOHHS in 2017 (see graph below), children and families account for 54% of total enrollment, and only account for 22% of total expenditure. Children and families have an average per member per month cost of \$292. Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN), which include individuals under age 21 who are eligible for SSI, children in substitute care, children with Katie Beckett coverage, or children receiving an adoption subsidy, account for 4% of enrollees and 7% of total Medicaid expenditure.⁶ These facts demonstrate how providing Rlte Care coverage to children and families is a cost-efficient investment.



Rhode Island annual Medicaid expenditure report – SFY 2016. (2017). Cranston, RI: Rhode Island EOHHS

Additional Comments on Special Initiatives within EOHHS Budget

- **Support for Maintained Rite Care Eligibility and Benefits**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is glad to see Rite Care eligibility and benefit levels maintained in the proposed budget. Rite Care is a success in regards to quality and cost-efficient investment as well as a public health success in supporting and improving the health of the state's children. By preserving the number and quality of benefits afforded to enrollees, families are able to count on the sustainability of their children's care.
- **Concerns Regarding Co-Pays for Non-elderly Adults**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has concerns with the proposed Medicaid co-pays for non-elderly adults over age 19 who are not living with a disability. Co-pays for inpatient hospital visits, non-emergency visits to the emergency room, non-preventive physician visits, and prescription drugs would be a burden on parents, pregnant women, and families. Because 70% of Medicaid recipients live under 100% of the federal poverty line, co-pays could be a serious obstacle to access care. Parent's decreased or loss of access to care negatively impacts children's health. Barriers to health care can lead to barriers to parenting including hindering parents' ability to physically and emotionally care for their children as well as maintaining health in order to work and provide economic security for their children.⁷ While the proposed co-pays would not apply to children's care, we believe co-pays for adult Medicaid populations will negatively affect the health of Rhode Island families and children.
- **Concerns Regarding Medicaid Managed Care Organizations Administrative and Medical Rates**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT recognizes the continued fiscal pressures and constraints placed on the Medicaid program and overall State budget. While decisions to achieve savings are never easy, we are concerned that continued decreases for administrative and medical costs for Medicaid/Rite Care managed care organizations may adversely affect delivery and quality of care, as well as overall health status and outcomes for members. Rhode Island's MCOs have been among the most highly ranked in the nation. It is vitally important the Rite Care program as well as other populations served by MCOs continue to have adequate resources to provide and deliver high-quality, comprehensive, and accessible care and coverage.
- **Support for Adequate Funding for Staffing Needs Related to UHIP Backlog and System Issues**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT supports the \$1.1 million increased funding for staffing needs related to ongoing Unified Health Infrastructure Project (UHIP) backlog and systems issues. Families deserve to have timely access to the benefits for which they qualify. Adequate staffing is essential to reducing the application backlog and preventing future growth of backlogs. The health and well-being of children and families is best served by supporting the functions of timely eligibility determination through adequate staffing.
- **Changes to Federal Policy**

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will continue to monitor policy changes at the federal level that may affect children's access to affordable health and dental insurance. We are pleased the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) has been funded for 10 years, and we look forward to building on the success of the Rite Care program in Rhode Island with the security of a 10 year commitment. We also continue to monitor changes to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that would affect Rhode Island children.

Closing

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT appreciates this opportunity to testify and thanks the Committee for their strong and continued leadership with children's health coverage. We urge the Committee to continue to preserve and build upon the successes of the RIte Care program.

References

¹U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2016. Table R2702.

²The state of children's health care quality in Medicaid and CHIP: Who are the higher-performing states? (2015). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

³2016 National Committee on Quality Assurance Rankings.

⁴Quality of care for children in Medicaid and CHIP: Findings from the 2015 child core set .(2017). Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

⁵Monitoring quality and access in RIte Care and Rhody Health Partners. (2017). Cranston, RI: Rhode Island EOHHS.

⁶Rhode Island annual Medicaid expenditure report – SFY 2016. (2017). Cranston, RI: Rhode Island EOHHS

⁷ DeVoe, J. E., Tillotson, C. J., Angier, H., Wallace, L. S. (2014). Recent Health Insurance Trends for US Families: Children gain while parents lose. *Maternal Child Health*, 1007–1016.