

State of Rhode Island Convenes Workgroup to Address Health Insurance Market Stability, Protect Against Threats to Coverage and Affordability

Without state-level action, health insurance premiums and hospital charity care will increase; middle class families and small businesses are likely to struggle to afford health coverage

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (April 17, 2018) – HealthSource RI (HSRI) and the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) today announced the establishment of the Market Stability Workgroup charged with determining state-level solutions to keep Rhode Island’s health insurance markets stable. The federal government’s recent decision to end cost-sharing subsidy payments and other attempts by the Trump administration to dismantle the Affordable Care Act (ACA) jeopardize the progress Rhode Island has made in recent years under the health law. The Workgroup’s diverse stakeholders will identify and propose sensible, state-based policy options to protect the gains Rhode Island has made under the ACA.

“No matter what happens in Washington, providing access to high-quality, affordable health coverage to all Rhode Islanders is our main priority,” said Governor Gina M. Raimondo. “Rhode Island has embraced the ACA and as a result, we’ve seen huge progress in the form of lower cost premiums and fewer uninsured residents. The recommendations of the Market Stability Workgroup will help protect our market against Washington’s actions.”

The Workgroup will hold its first meeting on Wednesday, April 18 at 8:00 a.m. and aims to meet as many as eight times through early June. This timeline will allow the Workgroup to weigh policy options that would lower costs, including the pursuit of a federal innovation waiver. Other potential recommendations would likely need to be acted upon well before the start of the 2019 health insurance coverage year.

The Workgroup will be co-chaired by Stephen Boyle and Bill Wray. Boyle is Chair of Rhode Island’s Health Insurance Advisory Council and President of The Greater Cranston Chamber of Commerce. Wray chairs HSRI’s Advisory Board, was formerly the Chief Operating Officer at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, and is currently the Chief Risk Officer at The Washington Trust. The Workgroup is comprised of the following additional members:

- Cristina Amedeo, Managing Director of UW 2-1-1 & The POINT, United Way of Rhode Island
- Gayle Goldin, Senator, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
- Jane Hayward, President & Chief Executive Officer, Rhode Island Health Center Association
- Janet Raymond, Senior Vice President of Economic Development and Operations, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
- John Gregory, President & Chief Executive Officer, Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
- Joshua Miller, Senator, Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
- Kim Keck, CFA, President & Chief Executive Officer, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island
- Larry Warner, MPH, Strategic Initiative Officer, Rhode Island Foundation
- Peter Hollmann, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Brown Medicine
- Peter Marino, President & Chief Executive Officer, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island
- Ralph Coppola, Senior Advisor, Meridien Financial Group

- Samuel Salganik, Attorney and Health Policy Analyst, Rhode Island Parent Information Network, Inc.
- Sue Pearlmutter, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Rhode Island College
- Susan Storti, PhD, RN, President & Chief Executive Officer, Substance Use and Mental Health Leadership Council of Rhode Island
- Teresa Paiva Weed, President, Hospital Association of Rhode Island
- Members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives invited

“Healthcare costs are a significant investment for employers across Rhode Island” said Boyle. “Market instability endangers affordability and accessibility of healthcare, and undermines efforts to foster a prosperous business climate in our state.

“In response to the ACA, the state brought together an effective coalition that resulted in more Rhode Islanders having access to health insurance than ever before”, said Wray. “In light of changes at the federal level, it’s time for the public and private sectors to come together once again, to ensure that our citizens continue to have access to quality healthcare at reasonable prices.”

Market Stability Workgroup meeting materials will be available on the Secretary of State’s [website](#).

About HealthSource RI

HealthSource RI was created because buying health insurance is complicated. It’s HealthSource RI’s job to help Rhode Islanders cut through the confusion and choose the best, most affordable health insurance plan possible. Since 2013, HealthSource RI has decreased the uninsured rate by more than two thirds, and today, 96 percent of Rhode Islanders have health coverage. For more information, visit HealthSourceRI.com, follow us on Twitter [@HealthSourceRI](https://twitter.com/HealthSourceRI), and like us on Facebook at fb.com/HealthSourceRI.

About the RI Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner

The Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) was established by legislation in 2004 to enhance the accountability of health insurers operating in the state of Rhode Island. Under this law, the Office is dedicated to: (1.) Protecting consumers (2.) Encouraging fair treatment of medical service providers (3.) Ensuring solvency of health insurers (4.) Improving the health care system’s quality, accessibility and affordability. OHIC sets and enforces standards for health insurers in each of these four areas. For more information, visit www.ohic.ri.gov.

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