

2021 RI SINGLE PAYER LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

COVID-19 and your advocacy have finally made RI legislators start to recognize that the existing multi-payer health insurance system is broken. Costs are too high, coverage too narrow, and private middlemen - who provide no actual healthcare - are enjoying record profits.

- Positives:
 - [The RI Senate passed a resolution in favor of federal single payer Medicare for All!](#)
 - Almost 100 people testified in favor of [our bills](#) (thanks to you and groups like [Providence DSA](#) making single payer their top issue)
 - 2nd year in a row that there were [no cuts in the Medicaid budget](#)
 - [New law passed](#) that makes insurers cover telemedicine - including Medicaid patients and specialist providers.
 - [New law passed](#) requiring coverage of doula services.
 - [New law passed](#) requiring coverage and no co-insurance payments for colorectal screenings.
 - [New law passed](#) limiting insulin co-pays to \$40/mo. (We know, still too high)
 - [New law passed](#) prohibiting insurance company Pharmacy Benefit Managers (e.g., CVS Caremark) from imposing "gag clauses" on pharmacists. Now, pharmacists can discuss cheaper drug options with customers... if asked.
 - Our RI Medicaid [Managed Care Organizations \(MCO\) bills](#) finally got RI Medicaid leaders to start talking with the RI Auditor General about better MCO oversight.
- Negatives:
 - Except for the Senate resolution, our bills got stuck in committee ("held for further study")
 - RI Senate approved (despite our testimony against) two pro-private health insurance company nominees:
 - Office of Health Insurance Commission (OHIC) - Patrick Tighe
 - RI Medicaid Program Director - Benjamin Shaffer
 - RI legislature approved turning "medically appropriate" into "medically and clinically appropriate" in the telemedicine law - giving insurers another potential basis ("[clinically appropriate](#)") on which to deny coverage.

During the summer/fall:

- We will update our Rhode Island 2021 bills and draft new 2022 bills.
- We will continue meeting with groups and legislators to advocate for single payer Medicare for All.

As always, we welcome questions, comments and suggestions about how we can do a better job educating the public and encouraging advocacy. Email: pnhp.ri@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support!

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