

Defending Health Care in 2017: What's at Stake for Rhode Island

With a new president and Congress, the health care gains made throughout the last six years face their greatest threat yet. Congress has voted more than 60 times to roll back the historic progress that has been made to expand health coverage to millions of people in this country and to improve coverage for those who already had it. These proposed changes will put the health—and lives—of countless Rhode Islanders at risk. Here's what Rhode Island stands to lose if the new president and Congress move forward to upend our health care system:

Tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders stand to lose health coverage

96,000 Rhode Islanders stand to lose their health coverage.¹

Rhode Island stands to lose **\$7 billion** in federal funding for Medicaid, CHIP, and financial assistance for marketplace coverage.²

Approximately **30,000** Rhode Islanders who currently get financial assistance to help pay for their health coverage will lose this help and will no longer have affordable coverage options. In 2016, Rhode Islanders receiving financial assistance saw their monthly premiums reduced on average **\$250** thanks to this help.³

The now-historically low rate of uninsured people will spike, with the number of uninsured in Rhode Island increasing **170 percent** by 2019.⁴ This will reverse the immense progress that has been made to expand coverage. Between 2013 and 2015:

- » The number of uninsured in Rhode Island declined **51 percent**.⁵

- » Working Rhode Islanders: The uninsured rate among working Rhode Islanders saw a **49 percent** decline.⁶

Repeal will end Rhode Island's Medicaid expansion and cause ripple effects across the state economy

59,000 stand to lose health coverage, most of whom are working.⁷ The Medicaid expansion has extended health coverage to lower-income Rhode Islanders who hold down jobs that are the backbone of the state's economy—from fast food workers to home care attendants to construction workers to cashiers. Repeal will leave these hard working Rhode Islanders out in the cold.

Rhode Island will lose millions in federal Medicaid funding. Over the course of a year and a half alone, Medicaid expansion brought **660 million** in federal dollars into the state economy.⁸ The impact of that lost federal Medicaid funding will have a ripple effect throughout the state economy, affecting hospitals, other health care providers, and businesses.

Rhode Islanders with private health insurance will be stripped of vital protections against discrimination

Approximately **463,000** Rhode Islanders with pre-existing conditions like asthma, diabetes, and cancer could once again be denied affordable, comprehensive coverage that actually covers their health care needs.⁹

Rhode Islanders will once again face a world where insurance plans routinely cap the most they will pay for someone's health care in a year and in their lifetime, effectively cutting off coverage for the sickest individuals when they most need it.

- » Roughly **374,000** Rhode Islanders (including **89,000** children) saw lifetime limits on coverage disappear thanks to the ACA's ban on these practices.¹⁰

Hundreds of thousands of Rhode Islanders will lose guaranteed coverage of free preventive services, like recommended cancer screenings and vaccines

Approximately **484,000** Rhode Islanders with private health coverage (including **91,000** children) and **203,000** Rhode Island seniors on Medicare will lose guaranteed access to free preventive care, like blood pressure screenings, immunizations, and cancer screenings.^{11, 12}

Insurance companies will no longer be required to put Rhode Islanders' premiums toward care, not profits

Insurers will no longer be held accountable for using people's premium dollars on care and quality improvement or paying back the difference.

- » Rhode Islanders have received around **\$2 million** in refunds from plans that overcharged for premiums since the ACA took effect.¹³

Thousands of seniors and people with disabilities will lose comprehensive drug coverage

The Medicare donut hole will re-open. This will leave Rhode Island's seniors and people with disabilities with a gap in prescription drug coverage and forced to pay thousands of dollars more in drug costs.

- » Seniors and people with disabilities in Rhode Island have saved **approximately \$60 million** on drug costs thanks to the ACA's closing the Medicare donut hole.¹⁴
- » In 2015 alone, approximately **16,000** seniors and people with disabilities in Rhode Island saved on average **\$912** on drug costs.¹⁵

Sources available online.