



**Testimony Re: House 8137- *The Protect Our Healthcare Act***  
**House Corporations Committee**

**April 14, 2026**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its strong support for House Bill 8137, the *Protect Our Healthcare Act*. This bill would help stabilize Rhode Island's health care system in the wake of significant federal cuts to health insurance and funding by providing additional funds for uncompensated care.

Rhode Island's uninsured population is expected to double due to federal cuts to Medicaid and the expiration of the federal tax credits for HealthSourceRI enrollees. [In 2024, 2,250 children had coverage through the health insurance exchange, and these families will have seen the cost of their health insurance coverage increase dramatically in 2026. For some families, this will mean that they make too little to afford health insurance coverage, but too much to qualify for Medicaid.](#) Individuals and families without insurance will continue to need health care, and will seek this necessary care from hospitals, community health centers, and free clinics. These safety net services do not have additional funding to support delivering care to these newly uninsured patients, and the whole safety net is at risk. Rhode Island must stabilize our safety net health care system to ensure that all patients who get their care at these facilities are able to access them. If they do not have the resources they need to effectively and efficiently care for these newly uninsured patients, all Rhode Islanders will see increased wait times and closures as a result.

The *Protect Our Healthcare Act* creates a health care program for uninsured individuals, allocating critical funds to support and sustain the safety net health care system in Rhode Island. It would allow existing sources of care for uninsured patients to absorb this newly uninsured population and reduce emergency room visits and admissions for patients with nowhere else to turn.

Rhode Island anticipates lower Medicaid caseloads for FY2027 and FY2028, with an estimated decrease in state spending of \$26.6M for FY2027 and \$54.8M for FY2028. The Governor's proposed budget allocates \$10M for uncompensated care through a variety of avenues, and we strongly support the *Protect Our Healthcare Act's* additional appropriation of \$53.2M for

FY2027 and \$109.6M annually thereafter.

We strongly encourage this Committee to pass House Bill 8137 to support the safety net health care delivery system that all Rhode Islanders need.

We appreciate the leadership that the Governor has shown in proposing additional funding for uninsured Rhode Islanders in the FY2027 Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.