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To: House Finance Committee
From: Karen Malcolm, Coordinator, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition
Date: February 28, 2024
Re: **Support (with amendment) Budget Article 9/Section 5/Provider Reimbursement Rates**

The Protect Our Healthcare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a shared mission to protect and promote comprehensive, quality, affordable healthcare for all.

The Coalition strongly supports the intent of budget article 9/section 5 to sustain a quality system of care for the people of Rhode Island. Specifically, we strongly support the governor's proposal to increase Medicaid rates for early childhood intervention to 100% of the OHIC recommended increase. *We urge the Committee to do the same for all recommended rate increases in the OHIC Social and Human Services Programs Review Final Report*, including EOHHS' intent to extend these to managed care payments.

For too long, stagnating reimbursement rates have eroded access to services that Rhode Islanders need to get and stay well and to live fully in their communities. As noted by the Commonwealth Fund, "Low reimbursement rates limit access to quality care and contribute to poor health outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries, who [are disproportionately people of color](#)."

The stagnation in reimbursement rates here in Rhode Island means that practitioners and workers are leaving the system; wait lists are long, and doors are closing. The OHIC recommended rates represent the minimum needed investment to stabilize and rebuild a more adequate, equitable system that is critical to the people of Rhode Island. Critical to the health and well-being of Rhode Islanders and critical to supporting the economy, the healthcare delivery system, and jobs.

Thank you.

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners and allies include: Economic Progress Institute, Mental Health Association RI, RI NOW, RIPIN, RI Health Center Association, United Way of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, SEIU Rhode Island Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, Womxn Project, HousingWorks RI, RI Organizing Project (RIOP), National Association of Social Workers RI Chapter, Thundermist Health Center, Foster Forward, RI Medical Society, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, Oasis Wellness & Recovery Center, RI Community Food Bank, RI Psychological Association, Advocates for Better Care