



SEIUHealthcare®
United for Quality Care

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Subject: Testimony in Support of H-5529 – Expanding Access to the Medicare Savings Program

Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, which represents more than 7,000 healthcare and service workers across Rhode Island—including nursing home workers, homecare workers, and community health center staff—we submit this letter in strong support of **H-5529**.

Our members care for older Rhode Islanders and people with disabilities every single day. They see the hard choices their patients and clients are forced to make: Do I buy groceries this week, or do I pay for my medications? Do I delay seeing a doctor because I can't afford the co-pay?

Even with Medicare, out-of-pocket costs are crushing for many of the people we care for. Premiums, deductibles, and co-pays add up to an average of **\$6,100 a year**—an enormous burden for seniors living on a fixed income. That's why expanding access to the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) through H-5529 is so important.

H-5529 would make a real difference for the people we serve:

- It would raise the income limits, allowing more low- and modest-income Rhode Islanders to get help paying their Medicare premiums and medical bills.
- It would eliminate outdated asset tests that unfairly disqualify people who may have a little savings but are still struggling every month.
- And it would automatically connect newly eligible individuals to the federal "Extra Help" program, making prescriptions more affordable.

For someone living on a tight Social Security check, saving **\$185 a month** on Medicare Part B premiums isn't small—it's life-changing. That money could mean paying the heating bill, buying two and a half weeks' worth of groceries, or finally being able to afford much-needed dental care.

We also know that helping seniors and people with disabilities access affordable healthcare keeps them healthier, keeps them out of emergency rooms, and helps them remain independent in their homes and communities longer—goals that all of us share.

Our members care deeply about their patients and clients. H-5529 would relieve some of the financial stress that too often stands in the way of good health.

We respectfully urge you to pass **H-5529** and stand with working families, seniors, and people with disabilities across Rhode Island.

Respectfully,

Alex Moore
Political Director, SEIU 1199NE