



Testimony of Matt Netto, AARP Rhode Island  
In support of House Bill 5529  
House Committee on Finance  
April 30, 2025

Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 125,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for expanding eligibility for the qualified Medicare beneficiary program by increasing the income limit from 100% to 138% of the federal poverty line and expanding eligibility for the qualified individual program by establishing an income limit of 138% to 186% of the federal poverty line as House Bill 5529 from Chairwoman Alzate is intended to do.

Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) are joint federal/state programs for people on Medicare who have limited income and resources. MSPs help qualified beneficiaries pay their Medicare costs, which can include Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) and Medicare Part B (medical insurance) deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments. Some beneficiaries also qualify for full Medicaid benefits ("dual eligibles"). MSPs are administered at the state level, with state Medicaid agencies (typically within a state's Department of Health) overseeing the programs.

Technically, MSP refers to four different programs available to qualified beneficiaries. To qualify for any of the MSPs, an individual must meet their state's income and asset limits. These limits are tied to the Federal Poverty Level and will vary by year. Calculation of MSP resource limits include money in a checking or savings account, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, retirement accounts, and real estate. Other assets, such as the individual's primary house, one car, and household goods do not count towards the resource limits.

Most states use these limits, but some states set limits to allow more people to qualify. For example, Alaska, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Indiana, Maine, Massachusetts and New York have higher income limits. Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, DC, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and Vermont do not apply asset limits. House Bill 7333 would make Rhode Island the 12th state to not apply asset limits.

It is AARP policy that federal and state governments should work together to identify strategies to maximize enrollment in MSPs. In addition, where fiscally feasible, states should take advantage of the opportunity to increase income eligibility for their MSPs. House Bill 5529 would both increase eligibility and maximize enrollment. We urge the committee to recommend passage on House Bill 5529.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Matt Netto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Associate State Director, Advocacy & Outreach  
AARP Rhode Island