



Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP)
134 Mathewson Street
Providence, RI 02903
401.351.5577

April 30, 2025

Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

On behalf of the RI Organizing Project, I am writing in support of H5529 sponsored by Representative Alzate. H5529 will expand eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program. Expanding eligibility for the Medicare Savings Plan will help more elders and adults with disabilities meet the challenges of rising health care costs. It will help people who earn under \$2,445 pay for their \$185 monthly Medicare premium and help others who earn under \$1,820 cover their Medicare co-pays.

The RI Organizing Project (RIOP) works primarily with low- and moderate-income elders and adults with disabilities. The people we work with who rely solely on Medicare for their health insurance struggle with high healthcare costs. They frequently cannot afford the co-pays required by Medicare. I have seen people incur medical debt due to unexpected hospital or rehab visits. I also have people tell me they skip doctors' appointments or medical procedures because they cannot afford the Medicare co-pays.

I have worked with older adults for the past 45 years. The current environment is one of the most challenging I have ever experienced. Older adults are struggling with new medical problems due to Covid 19. The rapid escalation of rental prices in Rhode Island and inflation are making it difficult for elders to make ends meet. I work in downtown Providence and see more elderly people becoming homeless due to rising rents.

Thank you for your time. Once again, I would like to ask for your support of H5529.

Sincerely,

Raymond Gagne Jr
Director
RI Organizing Project.