



May 20, 2025

House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
Housefinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: **Testimony SUPPORTING HB 5996**, The Individual Marketplace Affordability Act

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of HB 5996.

Advocates for Better Care in Rhode Island stands for the rights and interests of residents in long-term care in Rhode Island. We strongly support House Bill 5996, The Individual Marketplace Affordability Act, a critical measure to ensure that Rhode Islanders maintain access to affordable health coverage. With the impending expiration of \$40 million in federal support at the end of 2025, immediate action is needed to prevent drastic premium increases that would put health insurance out of reach for many residents.

Without intervention, nearly all enrollees in the state's individual marketplace will see their premiums skyrocket—by an average of 85%, with some facing even higher increases. This will force many Rhode Islanders to make impossible choices: going uninsured, enrolling in inadequate plans with limited coverage, or forgoing essential medical care altogether. For older adults, particularly those paying for long-term care or on fixed incomes, these financial burdens can have devastating consequences, leading to worsening health outcomes and increased reliance on emergency services and Medicaid.

HB 5996 offers a proactive and sustainable solution. By establishing a state-funded affordability program supported by contributions from all commercial insurers, this bill ensures that Rhode Island can fully replace the expiring federal tax credits with a modest assessment of approximately 1%. This investment is essential to keeping coverage through HealthSource RI both accessible and affordable, helping to prevent coverage gaps and unnecessary financial hardship for those who rely on it.

Stable and affordable health coverage is essential for the well-being of all Rhode Islanders, particularly our aging population. By passing HB 5996, Rhode Island can continue to protect its residents from the destabilizing effects of federal funding cuts, ensuring that health care remains within reach for those who need it most.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for all of your work on behalf of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,  
ABC-RI