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March 18, 2025

RIPIN

Attn: Samuel Salganik  
300 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite 300  
Warwick, RI 02888

**Re: RIPIN Duals Ombudsman Program Sustainability**

Dear Sam,

Thank you for informing us about the Governor's FY26 budget proposal to eliminate RIPIN's ombudsman program that helps Medicare-Medicaid duals navigate their unique coverage options. As a health insurer and provider to local Medicare-Medicaid dual-eligible members, our hope is that this program can be sustained. We regularly refer elders and their caregivers not enrolled in PACE to RIPIN to resolve challenges that are unique to duals and that no other local resource can resolve. RIPIN's program is an invaluable source of specialized expertise and a great resource in serving this high need population.

You have informed us that the program serves about 400 duals annually, and that it has helped the state save more than \$2M in health care costs since the program's inception in 2016 (and \$343,189 during FY24). You have also informed us that the Governor's FY26 budget proposes to eliminate this program after December 31, 2025. We are especially concerned about the timing of this proposed elimination because Rhode Island's duals population may be forced to undergo one or more transitions in coverage in 2026 caused by the end of federal authorization for the Medicare-Medicaid Plan currently operated by NHPRI under the brand name Integrity. The State's recent procurement of Medicaid Managed Care plans also envisioned a change to the State's landscape for duals special needs ("D-SNP") plans, another big source of coverage for duals. After the cancellation of that procurement, the State's roadmap for coverage for duals after 2025 is unclear. If any transitions happen, we hope RIPIN will be there to support these highly vulnerable members.

You also informed us that the ombudsman program can be sustained at current capacity through the entirety of FY 2026 with an additional allocation of only \$59,211 in general revenue over and above what the Governor has already proposed. We hope that you can secure this funding, and please feel free to share this letter with policymakers during your advocacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Kwiatkowski".

Joan Kwiatkowski  
Chief Executive Officer