

RI Minority Elder Task Force
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May 29, 2026

RI General Assembly
House Finance Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903



Re: Support of House Bill 7631

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Minority Elder Task Force, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill H7631, which would eliminate the asset limit for Rhode Island's Medicare Savings Program (MSP).

The current asset limit within the Medicare Savings Program creates an unnecessary barrier for older adults and individuals with disabilities who live on modest fixed incomes. Many have spent decades working, saving responsibly, and preparing for emergencies, only to discover that those modest savings disqualify them from receiving critical assistance with Medicare costs. These savings are not signs of wealth; they are often the only financial cushion available to cover unexpected medical expenses, home repairs, transportation needs, or other emergencies.

For minority older adults, who disproportionately experience economic insecurity, health disparities, and lower lifetime earnings due to systemic inequities, these barriers can be especially harmful. Eliminating the asset test would help ensure that access to healthcare assistance is based on actual financial need rather than modest savings accumulated through a lifetime of hard work.

The Medicare Savings Program already provides substantial relief by helping eligible individuals pay Medicare premiums and, in some cases, deductibles and copayments. Participation also unlocks access to Medicare Part D Extra Help, significantly reducing prescription drug costs. Together, these benefits can mean the difference between stability and crisis for many Rhode Islanders.

Removing the asset limit is not only fair and compassionate, but it is also sound public policy. It simplifies program administration, reduces burdens on applicants and state agencies, and aligns Rhode Island with neighboring states that have already recognized the value of eliminating this outdated requirement.

As Rhode Island's population continues to age, it is essential that we adopt policies that support financial security, health equity, and aging with dignity. H7631 represents a practical step toward achieving those goals and will positively impact thousands of older adults and people with disabilities across our state.

The Rhode Island Minority Elder Task Force respectfully urges the General Assembly to pass H7631 and remove the asset limit for the Medicare Savings Program.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to the well-being of Rhode Island's older adults.

Sincerely,

Janette Conway, Chair
Rhode Island Minority Elder Task Force