



www.ProtectHealthRI.org

To: House Rules Committee
From: Karen Malcolm, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition (ProtectRIHealth@gmail.com)
Date: January 15, 2025
Re: **SUPPORT H5010** – Include Equity Impact Review when submitting House bills

The Protect Our HealthCare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a shared mission to protect, improve, and expand equitable access to quality, person-centered, affordable health care for all.

The Coalition strongly **supports H5010**, which would update House rules, requiring members to include an equity impact review when submitting legislation for introduction in the House.

In healthcare, equity is the goal of providing fair and equal healthcare opportunities for everyone. It addresses the systemic and structural causes of health disparities and barriers to coverage and healthcare services. Health disparities are preventable differences in health outcomes between groups of people and can include differences in access to care, implicit bias in treatment, and in social determinants of health. One example is the disparity in infant mortality rates; as noted in the 2024 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook, “In Rhode Island between 2018 and 2022, the Black infant mortality rate was 8.1 deaths per 1,000 live births, which is three times the white infant mortality rate of 2.7 deaths per 1,000 live births.”

An equity impact statement is simply a tool to help measure how a bill could affect historical disparities. By assessing key factors like race, ethnicity, age, gender, and disability, an equity review can help lawmakers identify whether a measure is likely to improve or worsen existing historical disparities, helping to avoid unintended harm. Requiring an equity review will help expand informed decision-making, improve transparency, and raise awareness by highlighting existing disparities and how to eliminate and avoid them.

We urge your support. Thank you.

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners: RIPIN, Economic Progress Institute, Mental Health Association RI, Advocates for Better Care, The Womxn Project, RI Health Center Association, RI Medical Society, RI Psychological Association, United Way of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, Foster Forward, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, RI Community Food Bank, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), National Association of Social Workers RI Chapter
