



May 5, 2026

Re: S2811

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of Senate Finance Committee,

SACRI is pleased to support S2811, the RHODE ISLAND PROTECT OUR HEALTHCARE ACT OF 2026 introduced by Senators DiPalma, DiMario, Murray, Thompson, Zurier and Vargas.

SACRI's mission is to mobilize people to implement an agenda that improves the quality of life of older Rhode Islanders and adults with disabilities. We accomplish this through *community organizing, public education, advocacy, and legislative action*. Addressing healthcare access and affordability is a priority for SACRI.

The Problem:

Starting in 2026 due to federal changes in Medicaid eligibility an estimated 33,000 R.I.ers will lose Medicaid coverage. An additional 20,000 will lose coverage from HealthSource RI because Congress did not extend the enhanced premium tax credits. In addition, some Medicare enrollees who have paid into the system their working lives may be terminated from Medicare due to their immigration status. Projections are that all these changes would cause the number of uninsured in the state to double!

Currently, care for uninsured persons is limited to our hospitals - who cannot deny care - local community health centers and several free clinics. Handling a significant influx of newly uninsured will be a tremendous challenge for these healthcare providers without additional resources and could cause a severe healthcare crisis.

The Solution:

S **S2811** creates the Uninsured health access program. The program would be overseen by a 7-member Advisory Board whose responsibilities would include researching current sources of care for the uninsured, designing the uninsured health access program, determining the appropriate allocation of funds and the qualifications for participants and providers. Rhode Island has already appropriated funds toward healthcare for low-income persons in the next two fiscal years and should continue that commitment. SACRI recommends the legislature maintain and build on this funding to provide the funds needed to implement the provisions of S2811.

Respectfully submitted,
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