



July 21, 2026

Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Medicaid Policy Unit

RE: Proposed Amendments to 210-RICR-40-05-1, Medicaid for Elders and Adults with Disabilities: Community Medicaid

Dear Secretary and EOHHS Policy Staff:

On behalf of Newport Mental Health, I am writing in support of the proposed amendments to 210-RICR-40-05-1 that increase the effective income eligibility limits for the Medicare Premium Payment Program for Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries and Qualifying Individuals. These changes will allow more older adults and individuals with disabilities to access important financial assistance with Medicare-related costs.

We applaud EOHHS for advancing policies that reduce financial barriers to care and help vulnerable Rhode Islanders maintain access to healthcare services. Expanding eligibility for these programs can improve financial stability and support access to essential medical and behavioral health treatment for individuals living on limited incomes.

Newport Mental Health appreciates the opportunity to comment and supports the adoption of these proposed amendments. We also encourage continued outreach efforts to ensure eligible Rhode Islanders are aware of these expanded benefits and understand how to access them.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to improving healthcare access across Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Dayna Gladstein

LICSW President and CEO

Written Testimony Regarding Proposed Amendment to Medicaid for Elders and Adults with Disabilities: Community Medicaid (210-RICR-40-05-1)

To the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services,

Our names are Caterina Dong and Marisol Pacheco, and we are medical students at Brown University passionate about increasing access to healthcare for vulnerable populations. We are submitting this testimony in support of the proposed amendment to 210-RICR-40-05-1 to expand income eligibility thresholds for the Medicare Premium Payment Program.

Healthcare access is not determined solely by insurance coverage. For many older adults and adults with disabilities, the buildup of small costs—including Medicare premiums, prescription medications, transportation, and follow-up care—can snowball and create significant barriers to maintaining health. This bill expands eligibility for Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMBs) and Qualifying Individuals (QIs), a step that we believe is crucial to reducing financial barriers for vulnerable populations who may face obstacles to healthcare access.

Throughout our clinical and real-life experiences, including working with patients experiencing housing instability through our Primary Care and Population Medicine Master's Program and conducting research focused on health inequities, we have seen how socioeconomic factors, including income, directly affect patients' ability to seek care and manage chronic conditions. We've heard our patients say they don't seek care because of how expensive healthcare can be, especially when they are living paycheck to paycheck but still don't qualify for insurance coverage. These decisions reflect the power insurance has over the day to day lives of Rhode Island citizens, and it is critical to ensure financial considerations are not inhibiting the most medically sound decisions.

The proposed increase in effective income limits—from 100% to 125% of the Federal Poverty Level for QMB eligibility and from 135% to 168% for QI eligibility—has the potential to extend support to individuals who may previously have been just above eligibility thresholds while still experiencing significant financial hardship.

Rhode Island has an opportunity to reduce healthcare inequities by ensuring that financial eligibility rules don't let older adults and individuals living with disabilities slip through the coverage gaps. Expanding access to Medicare Savings Programs can help patients afford essential healthcare services, maintain medication adherence, and prevent avoidable delays in care.

As medical students and future primary care physicians, we appreciate EOHHS's work to improve access to affordable healthcare and support this proposed amendment.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

Caterina Dong & Marisol Pacheco

Medical Students, Warren Alpert Medical of Brown University, Class of 2029