



To: House Committee on Finance  
From: Linda Katz, Chair, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition  
Date: March 10, 2020  
Re: **SUPPORT RItShare Budget Articles 14 (Section 5(d)) and 20 (Section 13)**

The Protect Our HealthCare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a goal to protect and promote quality, affordable healthcare for all. The Coalition also includes hundreds of community members around the state who support the Coalition's mission.

**The Coalition supports large employer reporting requirements intended to help maximize RItShare enrollment as recommended in the Governor's budget.**

Maintaining a quality healthcare system that is responsive to the needs of Rhode Islanders depends on all partners participating in the shared responsibility for paying for it. That shared responsibility includes the state, employers, and individual consumers. Especially with passage last year of the state-based individual mandate, the expectation should be that all large for-profit employers in Rhode Island participate in this shared responsibility – the RItShare program provides them the avenue to do so.

RItShare helps low-income employees who qualify for Medicaid to access cost-effective employer sponsored health insurance. The state covers the employee's share of the cost for the premium. However, a RItShare enrollee may be required to pay co-pays for doctors' visits, which, because of cost may deter the person from seeking necessary care. RItShare helps reduce state Medicaid costs, while expanding employer investment, ultimately improving access to quality affordable coverage for every Rhode Islander. But we need to find a way to ensure that RItShare enrollees do not incur out of pocket expenses.

We support expanding the RItShare program – and to hold large employers more accountable -- by approving these proposals.

Thank you.

***Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include:*** Economic Progress Institute, Mental Health Association RI, RI NOW, RI Parent Information Network, RI Health Center Association, NAACP Providence Branch, United Way of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, Foster Forward, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, Oasis Wellness Center, RI Community Food Bank, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), Thundermist Health Center

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