

INVESTING IN INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES: Health Care

The following three icons highlight some of the many issues addressed in the budget and legislative session. Absence of an icon generally indicates that work needs to be done on the issue or that the item simply provides information.

 One of the legislative priorities identified by EPI prior to this year's session.

 Significant progress.

 Mixed bag—some, yet inadequate, progress.

 **Rlte Care for All Children:** Proposed legislation would have expanded Rlte Care comprehensive health care coverage to all income-eligible Rhode Island children regardless of immigration status. State funds would be used to cover 'undocumented' children as Rhode Island once did for several years and as a number of states continue to do. The legislation received committee hearings though no votes in both the House and Senate.

 **Perinatal Doula Services:** The budget authorizes the use of Medicaid funds to pay for doula services, to help women with childbirth. And legislation requires that private insurance company pay for these services as well. Doulas are certified birthing assistants or coaches, and studies have shown that doulas result in better pregnancy outcomes for women and their newborns, including a lower rate of Caesarean births. Doulas are considered an important medical support for Black mothers especially.

 **Increased Maintenance of Need Allowance (MNA) for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS):** Seniors and people with disabilities who need long-term care services in a nursing home or in their own home may qualify for Medicaid even with income higher than the community Medicaid limits. Once eligibility is established, the individual is required to contribute their income, less the applicable MNA, to their cost of care. Rhode Islanders receiving services at home have been required to contribute all income above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The current FPL and therefore MNA is \$12,880/year, leaving recipients without sufficient income to support themselves at home. The FY2022 budget increases the (MNA) from 100% FPL to three times the SSI standard—an increase to \$28,584, thereby decreasing the individual's contribution and leaving them with greater resources. The budget includes \$2.4M general revenue to support this change, with federal matching funds available.

 **Expanded Eligibility for Rhode Island's "At Home Program":** This program, administered by the Office of Healthy Aging (OHA), subsidizes the cost of homemaker services and adult day health services for individuals who are ineligible for Medicaid. The income limit had been 200% FPL (\$25,760 for an individual). Using both general revenue and federal Medicaid funds, the budget raised the income limit to 250% FPL (\$32,200 for an individual), allowing an estimated 430 more seniors to qualify. The budget also expanded eligibility to include younger people with Alzheimer's disease.

Health Source Rhode Island (HSRI) Funding: The budget provides \$10.8 million in funding for HSRI, including \$2.8 million from general revenue funds. The budget also includes \$14.1 million from the individual mandate assessment, funds used to support the reinsurance program.