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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES --
EQUAL PAY FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Introduced By: Senators Lauria, DiMario, Valverde, Murray, Vargas, DiPalma, Mack,
Felag, Urso, and Pearson

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 27-18 of the General Laws entitled "Accident and Sickness Insurance
2 Policies" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **27-18-96. Equal pay for healthcare providers.**

4 (a) Whenever any policy of health insurance provides for reimbursement for any service
5 which is within the lawful scope of practice of a duly licensed and certified nurse practitioner, as
6 defined in § 5-34-3, including prescribing or dispensing drugs, a primary care or mental health
7 service, provided by a licensed physician, the insured under the policy is entitled to reimbursement
8 for such service, whether it is performed by a physician licensed by the board of medical licensure
9 and discipline or by a duly licensed nurse practitioner, if provided by a licensed physician assistant,
10 as defined in chapter 54 of title 5 or a certified nurse practitioner, or other licensed healthcare
11 professionals, as defined in § 27-18-1.1, if the service is within the lawful scope of practice of the
12 physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

13 (b) The reimbursement of a service described in subsection (a) of this section that is
14 provided by a licensed physician assistant or a certified nurse practitioner who is in an independent
15 practice shall be in the same amount as the reimbursement paid under the policy to a licensed
16 physician performing the service in the area served.

17 (c) As used in this section, "independent practice" means the provision of healthcare
18 services to patients in a setting in which the licensed physician assistant or the certified nurse

1 practitioner bills insurers for services identified by diagnosis and procedure codes using the
2 physician assistant's or nurse practitioner's own name and national provider identifier.

3 (d) This section does not apply to group practice health maintenance organizations that are
4 federally qualified pursuant to Title XIII of the Health Maintenance Organization Act, or other
5 insurers that employ physicians, licensed physician assistants or certified nurse practitioners to
6 provide primary care or mental health services and do not compensate such practitioners on a fee
7 for-service basis.

8 (e) An insurer may not reduce the reimbursement paid to a licensed physician in order to
9 comply with this section.

10 SECTION 2. Chapter 27-19 of the General Laws entitled "Nonprofit Hospital Service
11 Corporations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

12 **27-19-88. Equal pay for healthcare providers.**

13 (a) Whenever any policy of health insurance provides for reimbursement for any service
14 which is within the lawful scope of practice of a duly licensed and certified nurse practitioner, as
15 defined in § 5-34-3, including prescribing or dispensing drugs, a primary care or mental health
16 service, provided by a licensed physician, the insured under the policy is entitled to reimbursement
17 for such service, whether it is performed by a physician licensed by the board of medical licensure
18 and discipline or by a duly licensed nurse practitioner, if provided by a licensed physician assistant,
19 as defined in chapter 54 of title 5 or a certified nurse practitioner, or other licensed healthcare
20 professionals, as defined in § 27-18-1.1, if the service is within the lawful scope of practice of the
21 physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

22 (b) The reimbursement of a service described in subsection (a) of this section that is
23 provided by a licensed physician assistant or a certified nurse practitioner who is in an independent
24 practice shall be in the same amount as the reimbursement paid under the policy to a licensed
25 physician performing the service in the area served.

26 (c) As used in this section, "independent practice" means the provision of healthcare
27 services to patients in a setting in which the licensed physician assistant or the certified nurse
28 practitioner bills insurers for services identified by diagnosis and procedure codes using the
29 physician assistant's or nurse practitioner's own name and national provider identifier.

30 (d) This section does not apply to group practice health maintenance organizations that are
31 federally qualified pursuant to Title XIII of the Health Maintenance Organization Act, or other
32 insurers that employ physicians, licensed physician assistants or certified nurse practitioners to
33 provide primary care or mental health services and do not compensate such practitioners on a fee
34 for-service basis.

1 (e) An insurer may not reduce the reimbursement paid to a licensed physician in order to
2 comply with this section.

3 SECTION 3. Chapter 27-20 of the General Laws entitled "Nonprofit Medical Service
4 Corporations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

5 **27-20-84. Equal pay for healthcare providers.**

6 (a) Whenever any policy of health insurance provides for reimbursement for any service
7 which is within the lawful scope of practice of a duly licensed and certified nurse practitioner, as
8 defined in § 5-34-3, including prescribing or dispensing drugs, a primary care or mental health
9 service, provided by a licensed physician, the insured under the policy is entitled to reimbursement
10 for such service, whether it is performed by a physician licensed by the board of medical licensure
11 and discipline or by a duly licensed nurse practitioner, if provided by a licensed physician assistant,
12 as defined in chapter 54 of title 5 or a certified nurse practitioner, or other licensed healthcare
13 professionals, as defined in § 27-18-1.1, if the service is within the lawful scope of practice of the
14 physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

15 (b) The reimbursement of a service described in subsection (a) of this section that is
16 provided by a licensed physician assistant or a certified nurse practitioner who is in an independent
17 practice shall be in the same amount as the reimbursement paid under the policy to a licensed
18 physician performing the service in the area served.

19 (c) As used in this section, "independent practice" means the provision of healthcare
20 services to patients in a setting in which the licensed physician assistant or the certified nurse
21 practitioner bills insurers for services identified by diagnosis and procedure codes using the
22 physician assistant's or nurse practitioner's own name and national provider identifier.

23 (d) This section does not apply to group practice health maintenance organizations that are
24 federally qualified pursuant to Title XIII of the Health Maintenance Organization Act, or other
25 insurers that employ physicians, licensed physician assistants or certified nurse practitioners to
26 provide primary care or mental health services and do not compensate such practitioners on a fee
27 for-service basis.

28 (e) An insurer may not reduce the reimbursement paid to a licensed physician in order to
29 comply with this section.

30 SECTION 4. Chapter 40-8 of the General Laws entitled "Medical Assistance" is hereby
31 amended by adding thereto the following section:

32 **40-8-33. Equal pay for healthcare providers.**

33 (a) Beginning January 1, 2027, the executive office of health and human services (EOHHS)
34 shall provide for reimbursement for any service which is within the lawful scope of practice of a

1 duly licensed and certified nurse practitioner, as defined in § 5-34-3, including prescribing or
2 dispensing drugs, a primary care or mental health service, provided by a licensed physician, the
3 insured under the policy is entitled to reimbursement for such service, whether it is performed by
4 a physician licensed by the board of medical licensure and discipline or by a duly licensed nurse
5 practitioner, if provided by a licensed physician assistant, as defined in chapter 54 of title 5 or a
6 certified nurse practitioner, or other licensed healthcare professionals, as defined in § 27-18-1.1, if
7 the service is within the lawful scope of practice of the physician assistant or nurse practitioner.

8 (b) The reimbursement of a service described in subsection (a) of this section that is
9 provided by a licensed physician assistant or a certified nurse practitioner who is in an independent
10 practice shall be in the same amount as the reimbursement paid under the policy to a licensed
11 physician performing the service in the area served.

12 (c) As used in this section, “independent practice” means the provision of healthcare
13 services to patients in a setting in which the licensed physician assistant or the certified nurse
14 practitioner bills insurers for services identified by diagnosis and procedure codes using the
15 physician assistant’s or nurse practitioner’s own name and national provider identifier.

16 (d) The secretary of the EOHHS shall apply to the United States department of health and
17 human services for any amendment to the state Medicaid plan or for any Medicaid waiver as
18 necessary to implement this section. The secretary of the EOHHS shall submit the Medicaid state
19 plan amendment on or before October 1, 2026.

20 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO INSURANCE -- ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE POLICIES --
EQUAL PAY FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

1 This act would require the state and private health insurers to reimburse claims for
2 healthcare services provided by nurse practitioners and physician assistants at the same amount as
3 the reimbursement paid to a physician performing the service in the area served.

4 This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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