

2026 -- S 2816

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LC005534
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

JOINT RESOLUTION

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$118,422 TO THE RHODE ISLAND PARENT
INFORMATION NETWORK (RIPIN)

Introduced By: Senators DiPalma, Valverde, Ujifusa, Lauria, and Urso

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Finance

1 WHEREAS, The approximately 40,000 Rhode Islanders with coverage through both
2 Medicare and Medicaid, known as “dual-eligible enrollees” or “duals,” are some of the most
3 medically fragile Rhode Islanders; and

4 WHEREAS, Medicare and Medicaid are poorly coordinated programs, coverage options
5 for duals are complex, and transitions in forms of coverage can have serious adverse impacts on
6 duals if significant outside assistance is not available to ensure needed medical services continue;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (“EOHHS”) had
9 established, in conjunction with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (“CMS”) a dual-
10 specific Medicare-Medicaid Plan (“MMP”) which integrated Medicare and Medicaid benefits
11 within a single plan, operated by Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island (“NHPRI”) as
12 Neighborhood Integrity, since July 1, 2016; and

13 WHEREAS, CMS withdrew support for the MMP effective December 31, 2025,
14 requiring EOHHS and NHPRI to end the Neighborhood Integrity plan and transition its enrollees
15 into a new form of coverage known as a “Fully-Integrated Dual Eligible Special Needs Plan” or
16 “FIDE-SNP”; and

17 WHEREAS, In late 2023, EOHHS issued a procurement for Medicaid Managed Care
18 services whereby awarded vendors would operate plans for duals that integrated Medicare and
19 Medicaid benefits within a single plan, but EOHHS subsequently canceled that procurement,

1 leaving the future of the managed care delivery system for duals in Rhode Island in a state of
2 confusion and flux; and

3 WHEREAS, CMS has recently promulgated proposed rules which allow for more
4 aggressive advertising of Medicare plans to enrollees including duals, while reducing
5 enforcement of fraudulent or misleading behavior by Medicare plan brokers, and reducing the
6 availability of trusted resources such as the Senior Health Insurance Assistance Programs
7 (“SHIPs”), which are expected to lead to significant confusion for duals navigating an evolving
8 and complicated menu of plans with fewer trusted resources to turn to when issues arise; and

9 WHEREAS, Approximately 11,300 duals are currently enrolled in the NHPRI FIDE-
10 SNP, and a further approximately 13,000 duals are enrolled in other dual-specific Medicare plans
11 (called “dual special needs plans” or “D-SNPs”); and

12 WHEREAS, RIPIN has operated, since 2016, Rhode Island’s Medicare-Medicaid Dual
13 Ombudsman Program (the “RIPIN Dual Ombudsman”), which helps duals navigate complicated
14 Medicare and Medicaid enrollment rules, Medicaid redeterminations, obstacles to health plan
15 enrollment, claim and prior authorization denials, access to care challenges, provider disputes,
16 and applications for other federally funded benefit programs; and

17 WHEREAS, The RIPIN Dual Ombudsman is funded through Medicaid administrative
18 matching with half federal Medicaid funding and half state funding, at the amount of \$236,844
19 all-funds (\$118,422 general revenue) per year, serving 467 clients in 2025, with 4,705 individual
20 client interactions, and with a 90% client satisfaction rate; and

21 WHEREAS, The RIPIN Dual Ombudsman has helped its clients save more than \$2.1
22 million in health care costs since January 1, 2018; and

23 WHEREAS, The Governor’s proposed fiscal year 2026-2027 budget proposes to
24 terminate funding for the RIPIN Dual Ombudsman; and

25 WHEREAS, An appropriation of \$118,422 in general revenue would leverage an
26 additional \$118,422 in federal revenue and would allow the RIPIN Dual Ombudsman program to
27 operate at current capacity for the 2027 fiscal year; and

28 WHEREAS, Without the RIPIN Dual Ombudsman, there will be no dedicated resource to
29 assist duals, and the sunset of that program would coincide with the largest system transition in
30 the history of Rhode Island’s managed care duals delivery system; and

31 WHEREAS, Continued funding for the RIPIN Dual Ombudsman is in keeping with the
32 EOHHS Mission Statement “to foster and strengthen a community-driven, equitable,
33 comprehensive, responsive, and high-quality health and human services system in Rhode Island”;
34 now, therefore be it

1 RESOLVED, That there is hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not
2 otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year 2026-2027, the total sum of one hundred eighteen
3 thousand four hundred twenty-two dollars (\$118,422) to RIPIN to continue the operation of the
4 RIPIN Dual Ombudsman, with the expectation that such funds will be matched by federal
5 Medicaid funds and administered by the office of the health insurance commissioner; and the
6 state controller is hereby authorized and directed to draw their orders upon the general treasurer
7 for payment of said sum, or so much thereof as may be from time to time required, upon receipt
8 of properly authenticated vouchers.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
JOINT RESOLUTION
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION OF \$118,422 TO THE RHODE ISLAND PARENT
INFORMATION NETWORK (RIPIN)

- 1 This resolution would appropriate the sum of \$118,422 to the Rhode Island Parent
- 2 Information Network (RIPIN).

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