

2026 -- S 2379 SUBSTITUTE A

LC003650/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Introduced By: Senators Ujifusa, Lawson, Ciccone, Tikoian, Appollonio, DiMario,  
Lauria, Valverde, Zurier, and Acosta

Date Introduced: January 30, 2026

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

(Dept. of Health)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 23-1-44 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-1 entitled "Department  
2 of Health" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **23-1-44. Routine childhood and adult immunization vaccines.**

4 (a) The department of health shall include in the department's immunization program those  
5 vaccines for routine childhood immunization as recommended by the Advisory Committee for  
6 Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) or as determined by the  
7 director of the department of health to be necessary to protect the public health, and for routine  
8 adult immunization as recommended by the ACIP, or as determined by the director of the  
9 department of health to be necessary to protect the public health ~~to the extent permitted by available~~  
10 ~~funds~~. The immunization program includes administrative and quality assurance services and the  
11 Rhode Island Child and Adult Immunization Registry (RICAIR), a confidential, computerized  
12 information system that is used to manage statewide immunizations, for all persons in Rhode  
13 Island.

14 (b) The director of the department of health shall appoint an advisory committee that will  
15 be convened ~~after the ACIP makes a recommendation regarding immunization~~ at the discretion of  
16 the director. The committee will review the ACIP recommendations ~~for the state~~ and director-  
17 initiated proposals for the state; assess the vaccine cost and feasibility; and advise the director of  
18 health and the office of the health insurance commissioner regarding insurers and providers acting  
19 on the ~~ACIP immunization recommendation~~ immunization recommendations or proposals. All

1 recommendations will be posted on the department of health website. The advisory committee  
2 membership shall include, but not be limited to, a primary care provider, [an epidemiologist, a](#)  
3 pharmacist, [major insurers, and at the discretion of the director](#), representatives of the nursing home  
4 industry, [and](#) the home healthcare industry ~~and major insurers~~.

5 (c) For the purpose of protecting patients' information, all personally-identifiable  
6 information obtained pursuant to this section shall be subject to the privacy protections of chapter  
7 37.3 of title 5 and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, Pub. L. No.  
8 104-191 (HIPAA), as amended.

9 SECTION 2. Section 23-101-2 of the General Laws in Chapter 23-101 entitled "Healthcare  
10 Provider Shield" is hereby amended to read as follows:

11 **23-101-2. Definitions.**

12 As used in this chapter, the followings words shall have the following meanings unless the  
13 context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 (1) "Aggrieved person" means:

15 (i) A person against whom hostile litigation is filed or prosecuted or the legal representative  
16 of a person against whom hostile litigation is filed or prosecuted; or

17 (ii) The employer of a person against whom hostile litigation is filed or prosecuted if the  
18 legally protected healthcare activity or aiding and assisting legally protected healthcare activity of  
19 the person that forms the basis of the hostile litigation was performed within the scope of the  
20 person's employment.

21 (2) "Aid and assist legally protected healthcare activity" and "aiding and assisting legally  
22 protected healthcare activity" mean:

23 (i) Any act or omission of a person aiding or effectuating or attempting to aid or effectuate  
24 any other person in legally protected healthcare activity; ~~or~~

25 (ii) The provision or administration of, or attempted provision or administration of,  
26 insurance coverage for gender-affirming healthcare services or reproductive healthcare services to  
27 a beneficiary or a dependent of a beneficiary by any insurer, payor, or employer.; or

28 (iii) The prescription or administration, dispensing, or provision of, or attempted  
29 administration, dispensing, or provision of, a vaccination pursuant to the routine childhood and  
30 adult immunization vaccine recommendations that are developed under § 23-1-44; or

31 ~~(iii)~~(iv) "Aiding and assisting legally protected healthcare activity" does not include any  
32 conduct that violates Rhode Island law or deviates from the applicable standard of care or that could  
33 form the basis of a civil, criminal, or administrative action under the laws of this state had the  
34 course of conduct that forms the basis for liability occurred entirely within this state.

1 (3) “Foreign judgment” means any judgment or decree of a court of another state.

2 (4) “Gender-affirming healthcare services” means all supplies, care, and services of a  
3 medical, behavioral health, mental health, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventive,  
4 rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication, relating to the treatment of gender  
5 dysphoria and gender incongruence in accordance with the accepted standard of care as defined by  
6 major medical professional organizations and agencies with expertise in the field of gender-  
7 affirming health care, including the Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender  
8 Diverse People, Version 8, or subsequent version, published by the World Professional Association  
9 for Transgender Health. “Gender-affirming healthcare services” does not include conversion  
10 therapy as defined by § 23-94-2.

11 (5) “Healthcare provider” means and shall apply to the following:

- 12 (i) A qualified physician licensed pursuant to chapters 37 and 37.3 of title 5;
- 13 (ii) A qualified osteopathic physician licensed pursuant to chapter 37 of title 5;
- 14 (iii) A qualified physician assistant licensed pursuant to chapter 54 of title 5;
- 15 (iv) A genetic counselor licensed pursuant to chapter 92 of title 5;
- 16 (v) A qualified psychologist licensed pursuant to chapter 44 of title 5;
- 17 (vi) A qualified social worker licensed pursuant to chapter 39.1 of title 5;
- 18 (vii) An advanced practice registered nurse, and a certified nurse practitioner, licensed  
19 pursuant to chapter 34 of title 5, and a certified registered nurse anesthetist licensed pursuant to  
20 chapters 34 and 34.2 of title 5;
- 21 (viii) A certified nurse midwife licensed pursuant to chapter 13 of this title;
- 22 (ix) A licensed clinical mental health counselor or associate, and a licensed marriage and  
23 family therapist or associate, licensed pursuant to chapter 63.2 of title 5;
- 24 (x) An electrologist licensed pursuant to chapter 32 of title 5;
- 25 (xi) A speech-language pathologist licensed pursuant to chapter 48 of title 5;
- 26 (xii) An occupational therapist licensed pursuant to chapter 40.1 of title 5;
- 27 (xiii) A chiropractic physician licensed pursuant to chapter 30 of title 5; and
- 28 (xiv) A pharmacist engaging in the practice of pharmacy and licensed pursuant to chapter  
29 19.1 of title 5.

30 (6) “Hostile litigation” means any litigation or other legal action, including civil, criminal,  
31 or administrative action, to deter, prevent, sanction, or punish any person engaging in legally  
32 protected healthcare activity or aiding and assisting legally protected healthcare activity by:

- 33 (i) Filing or prosecuting any litigation or other legal action in any other state where liability  
34 is based on legally protected healthcare activity or aiding and assisting legally protected healthcare

1 activity that occurred in this state, including any action in which liability is based on any theory of  
2 vicarious, joint, or several liability; or

3 (ii) Attempting to enforce any order or judgment issued in connection with any litigation  
4 or other legal action under subsection (6)(i) of this section by any party to the action or by any  
5 person acting on behalf of any party to the action.

6 (iii) For purposes of this chapter, litigation or other legal action is based on legally protected  
7 healthcare activity or aiding and assisting legally protected healthcare activity that occurred in this  
8 state if any part of any act or omission involved in the course of conduct that forms the basis for  
9 liability in the action occurs or is initiated in this state, whether or not the act or omission is alleged  
10 or included in any pleading or other filing in the lawsuit.

11 (7) “Law enforcement agency” means any police department in any city or town or the  
12 state police as defined in the general laws. For purposes of this act, a law enforcement agency may  
13 include any other non-federal entity in the state charged with the enforcement of laws relating to  
14 the custody of detained persons.

15 (8) “Legally protected healthcare activity” means:

16 (i) The exercise and enjoyment or attempted exercise and enjoyment by any person of the  
17 right secured by this state to gender-affirming healthcare services or reproductive healthcare  
18 services; ~~and~~

19 (ii) The provision or attempted provision of gender-affirming healthcare services or  
20 reproductive healthcare services that are permitted under the laws and regulations of this state and  
21 that are provided in accordance with the applicable standard of care by a person properly licensed  
22 under the laws of this state and physically present in this state, regardless of whether the patient is  
23 located in this state or whether the person is licensed in the state where the patient is located at the  
24 time the services are rendered; ~~and~~

25 (iii) The provision or attempted provision of a routine childhood or adult immunization  
26 vaccine under § 23-1-44.

27 ~~(iii)~~(iv) “Legally protected healthcare activity” does not include any conduct that could  
28 form the basis of a civil, criminal, or administrative action under the laws of this state had the  
29 course of conduct that forms the basis for liability occurred entirely within this state and/or in  
30 violation of Rhode Island law.

31 (9) “Reproductive healthcare services” means all supplies, care, and services of a medical,  
32 behavioral health, mental health, surgical, psychiatric, therapeutic, diagnostic, preventive,  
33 rehabilitative, or supportive nature, including medication, relating to pregnancy, contraception,  
34 assisted reproduction, pregnancy loss management, or the termination of a pregnancy in accordance

1 with the applicable standard of care as defined by major medical professional organizations and  
2 agencies with expertise in the field of reproductive health care.

3 [\(10\) "Routine childhood and adult immunization vaccine recommendations" means](#)  
4 [vaccine recommendations as determined by the director of the department of health to be necessary](#)  
5 [to protect the public health under § 23-1-44.](#)

6 ~~(10)~~(11) "State" means a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico,  
7 the United States Virgin Islands or any territory or insular possession subject to the jurisdiction of  
8 the United States. The term "this state" refers to the state of Rhode Island.

9 SECTION 3. Chapter 27-18 of the General Laws entitled "Accident and Sickness Insurance  
10 Policies" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

11 **27-18-96. Coverage for vaccinations.**

12 [Every individual or group medical service contract or every individual or group hospital or](#)  
13 [medical expense insurance policy, plan or group policy delivered, issued, or renewed in this state](#)  
14 [on or after January 1, 2027, shall provide coverage, without cost-sharing, for vaccinations](#)  
15 [recommended by the Rhode Island department of health \(RIDOH\).](#)

16 SECTION 4. Chapter 27-19 of the General Laws entitled "Nonprofit Hospital Service  
17 Corporations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

18 **27-19-88. Coverage for vaccinations.**

19 [Every individual or group medical service contract or every individual or group hospital or](#)  
20 [medical expense insurance policy, plan or group policy delivered, issued, or renewed in this state](#)  
21 [on or after January 1, 2027, shall provide coverage, without cost-sharing, for vaccinations](#)  
22 [recommended by the Rhode Island department of health \(RIDOH\).](#)

23 SECTION 5. Chapter 27-20 of the General Laws entitled "Nonprofit Medical Service  
24 Corporations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

25 **27-20-84. Coverage for vaccinations.**

26 [Every individual or group medical service contract or every individual or group hospital or](#)  
27 [medical expense insurance policy, plan or group policy delivered, issued, or renewed in this state](#)  
28 [on or after January 1, 2027, shall provide coverage, without cost-sharing, for vaccinations](#)  
29 [recommended by the Rhode Island department of health \(RIDOH\).](#)

30 SECTION 6. Chapter 27-41 of the General Laws entitled "Health Maintenance  
31 Organizations" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

32 **27-41-101. Coverage for vaccinations.**

33 [Every individual or group medical service contract or every individual or group hospital or](#)  
34 [medical expense insurance policy, plan or group policy delivered, issued, or renewed in this state](#)

1 on or after January 1, 2027, shall provide coverage, without cost-sharing, for vaccinations  
2 recommended by the Rhode Island department of health (RIDOH).

3 SECTION 7. Chapter 40-8 of the General Laws entitled "Medical Assistance" is hereby  
4 amended by adding thereto the following section:

5 **40-8-33. Coverage for vaccinations.**

6 Commencing January 1, 2027, the medical assistance program shall provide coverage,  
7 without cost-sharing, for all vaccinations recommended by the Rhode Island department of health  
8 (RIDOH). This recommendation shall apply to all Medicaid beneficiaries, whether enrolled in fee-  
9 for-service or managed care, to the extent permitted under federal law.

10 SECTION 8. Chapter 40-8.5 of the General Laws entitled "Health Care for Elderly and  
11 Disabled Residents Act" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

12 **40-8.5-1.2. Coverage for vaccinations.**

13 (a) As used herein, "managed care systems" is defined as systems that: integrate an efficient  
14 financing mechanism with quality service delivery; provide a "medical home" to ensure appropriate  
15 care and deter unnecessary services; and place emphasis on preventive and primary care. For  
16 purposes of this section, managed care systems may also be defined to include a primary care case-  
17 management model, community health teams, and/or other such arrangements that meet standards  
18 established by the executive office and serve the purposes of this section. Managed care systems  
19 may also include services and supports that optimize the health and independence of beneficiaries  
20 who are determined to need Medicaid-funded long-term care under chapter 8.10 of this title ("long-  
21 term care service reform for Medicaid eligible individuals") or to be at risk for the care under the  
22 applicable federal state plan or waiver authorities and the rules and regulations promulgated by the  
23 executive office. Any Medicaid beneficiaries who have third-party medical coverage or insurance  
24 may be provided such services through an entity certified by, or in a contractual arrangement with,  
25 the executive office or, as deemed appropriate, exempt from mandatory managed care in  
26 accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the executive office.

27 (b) Commencing January 1, 2027, any Medicaid managed care organizations under  
28 contract with the executive office of health and human services shall provide coverage, without  
29 cost-sharing, for vaccinations recommended by the Rhode Island department of health (RIDOH),  
30 to the extent permitted under federal law.

31 SECTION 9. Chapter 36-12 of the General Laws entitled "Insurance Benefits" is hereby  
32 amended by adding thereto the following section:

33 **36-12-2.1.1. Coverage for vaccinations.**

34 Commencing January 1, 2027, the director of administration shall administer health benefit

1 [programs for state employees and retirees, and shall ensure that coverage is provided, without cost-](#)  
2 [sharing, for vaccinations recommended by the Rhode Island department of health \(RIDOH\).](#)

3 SECTION 10. Severability.

4 If any section of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the  
5 invalidity shall not affect other sections or applications of the act that can be given effect without  
6 the invalid section or application, and to this end the sections of this act are declared severable.

7 SECTION 11. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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1           Commencing January 1, 2027, this act would mandate insurers provide health insurance  
2 coverage without cost-share requirements for vaccinations recommended by the state department  
3 of health and would mandate the coverage for the medical assistance program and managed care  
4 organizations.

5           This act would take effect upon passage.

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