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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE--LONG-TERM CARE  
SERVICE AND FINANCE REFORM

Introduced By: Representative Patricia A. Serpa

Date Introduced: February 24, 2021

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 40-8.9-9 of the General Laws in Chapter 40-8.9 entitled "Medical  
2 Assistance - Long-Term Care Service and Finance Reform" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **40-8.9-9. Long-term-care rebalancing system reform goal.**

4 (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of state law, the executive office of health and  
5 human services is authorized and directed to apply for, and obtain, any necessary waiver(s), waiver  
6 amendment(s), and/or state-plan amendments from the Secretary of the United States Department  
7 of Health and Human Services, and to promulgate rules necessary to adopt an affirmative plan of  
8 program design and implementation that addresses the goal of allocating a minimum of fifty percent  
9 (50%) of Medicaid long-term-care funding for persons aged sixty-five (65) and over and adults  
10 with disabilities, in addition to services for persons with developmental disabilities, to home- and  
11 community-based care; provided, further, the executive office shall report annually as part of its  
12 budget submission, the percentage distribution between institutional care and home- and  
13 community-based care by population and shall report current and projected waiting lists for long-  
14 term-care and home- and community-based care services. The executive office is further  
15 authorized and directed to prioritize investments in home- and community-based care and to  
16 maintain the integrity and financial viability of all current long-term-care services while pursuing  
17 this goal.

18 (b) The reformed long-term-care system rebalancing goal is person-centered and

1 encourages individual self-determination, family involvement, interagency collaboration, and  
2 individual choice through the provision of highly specialized and individually tailored home-based  
3 services. Additionally, individuals with severe behavioral, physical, or developmental disabilities  
4 must have the opportunity to live safe and healthful lives through access to a wide range of  
5 supportive services in an array of community-based settings, regardless of the complexity of their  
6 medical condition, the severity of their disability, or the challenges of their behavior. Delivery of  
7 services and supports in less-costly and less-restrictive community settings will enable children,  
8 adolescents, and adults to be able to curtail, delay, or avoid lengthy stays in long-term-care  
9 institutions, such as behavioral health residential-treatment facilities, long-term-care hospitals,  
10 intermediate-care facilities, and/or skilled nursing facilities.

11 (c) Pursuant to federal authority procured under § 42-7.2-16, the executive office of health  
12 and human services is directed and authorized to adopt a tiered set of criteria to be used to determine  
13 eligibility for services. The criteria shall be developed in collaboration with the state's health and  
14 human services departments and, to the extent feasible, any consumer group, advisory board, or  
15 other entity designated for these purposes, and shall encompass eligibility determinations for long-  
16 term-care services in nursing facilities, hospitals, and intermediate-care facilities for persons with  
17 intellectual disabilities, as well as home- and community-based alternatives, and shall provide a  
18 common standard of income eligibility for both institutional and home- and community-based care.  
19 The executive office is authorized to adopt clinical and/or functional criteria for admission to a  
20 nursing facility, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual disabilities that  
21 are more stringent than those employed for access to home- and community-based services. The  
22 executive office is also authorized to promulgate rules that define the frequency of re-assessments  
23 for services provided for under this section. Levels of care may be applied in accordance with the  
24 following:

25 (1) The executive office shall continue to apply the level-of-care criteria in effect on June  
26 30, 2015, for any recipient determined eligible for and receiving Medicaid-funded long-term  
27 services in supports in a nursing facility, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with  
28 intellectual disabilities on or before that date, unless:

29 (i) The recipient transitions to home- and community-based services because he or she  
30 would no longer meet the level-of-care criteria in effect on June 30, 2015; or

31 (ii) The recipient chooses home- and community-based services over the nursing facility,  
32 hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual disabilities. For the purposes of  
33 this section, a failed community placement, as defined in regulations promulgated by the executive  
34 office, shall be considered a condition of clinical eligibility for the highest level of care. The

1 executive office shall confer with the long-term-care ombudsperson with respect to the  
2 determination of a failed placement under the ombudsperson's jurisdiction. Should any Medicaid  
3 recipient eligible for a nursing facility, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with  
4 intellectual disabilities as of June 30, 2015, receive a determination of a failed community  
5 placement, the recipient shall have access to the highest level of care; furthermore, a recipient who  
6 has experienced a failed community placement shall be transitioned back into his or her former  
7 nursing home, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual disabilities  
8 whenever possible. Additionally, residents shall only be moved from a nursing home, hospital, or  
9 intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual disabilities in a manner consistent with  
10 applicable state and federal laws.

11 (2) Any Medicaid recipient eligible for the highest level of care who voluntarily leaves a  
12 nursing home, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual disabilities shall  
13 not be subject to any wait list for home- and community-based services.

14 (3) No nursing home, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual  
15 disabilities shall be denied payment for services rendered to a Medicaid recipient on the grounds  
16 that the recipient does not meet level-of-care criteria unless and until the executive office has:

17 (i) Performed an individual assessment of the recipient at issue and provided written notice  
18 to the nursing home, hospital, or intermediate-care facility for persons with intellectual disabilities  
19 that the recipient does not meet level-of-care criteria; and

20 (ii) The recipient has either appealed that level-of-care determination and been  
21 unsuccessful, or any appeal period available to the recipient regarding that level-of-care  
22 determination has expired.

23 (d) The executive office is further authorized to consolidate all home- and community-  
24 based services currently provided pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1396n into a single system of home- and  
25 community-based services that include options for consumer direction and shared living. The  
26 resulting single home- and community-based services system shall replace and supersede all 42  
27 U.S.C. § 1396n programs when fully implemented. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the resulting  
28 single program home- and community-based services system shall include the continued funding  
29 of assisted-living services at any assisted-living facility financed by the Rhode Island housing and  
30 mortgage finance corporation prior to January 1, 2006, and shall be in accordance with chapter 66.8  
31 of title 42 as long as assisted-living services are a covered Medicaid benefit.

32 (e) The executive office is authorized to promulgate rules that permit certain optional  
33 services including, but not limited to, homemaker services, home modifications, respite, and  
34 physical therapy evaluations to be offered to persons at risk for Medicaid-funded long-term care

1 subject to availability of state-appropriated funding for these purposes.

2 (f) To promote the expansion of home- and community-based service capacity, the  
3 executive office is authorized to pursue payment methodology reforms that increase access to  
4 homemaker, personal care (home health aide), assisted living, adult supportive-care homes, and  
5 adult day services, as follows:

6 (1) Development of revised or new Medicaid certification standards that increase access to  
7 service specialization and scheduling accommodations by using payment strategies designed to  
8 achieve specific quality and health outcomes.

9 (2) Development of Medicaid certification standards for state-authorized providers of adult  
10 day services, excluding providers of services authorized under § 40.1-24-1(3), assisted living, and  
11 adult supportive care (as defined under chapter 17.24 of title 23) that establish for each, an acuity-  
12 based, tiered service and payment methodology tied to: licensure authority; level of beneficiary  
13 needs; the scope of services and supports provided; and specific quality and outcome measures.

14 The standards for adult day services for persons eligible for Medicaid-funded long-term  
15 services may differ from those who do not meet the clinical/functional criteria set forth in § 40-  
16 8.10-3.

17 (3) As the state's Medicaid program seeks to assist more beneficiaries requiring long-term  
18 services and supports in home- and community-based settings, the demand for home-care workers  
19 has increased, and wages for these workers has not kept pace with neighboring states, leading to  
20 high turnover and vacancy rates in the state's home-care industry, the executive office shall institute  
21 a one-time increase in the base-payment rates for home-care service providers to promote increased  
22 access to and an adequate supply of highly trained home-healthcare professionals, in amount to be  
23 determined by the appropriations process, for the purpose of raising wages for personal care  
24 attendants and home health aides to be implemented by such providers.

25 (4) A prospective base adjustment, effective not later than July 1, 2018, of ten percent  
26 (10%) of the current base rate for home-care providers, home nursing care providers, and hospice  
27 providers contracted with the executive office of health and human services and its subordinate  
28 agencies to deliver Medicaid fee-for-service personal care attendant services.

29 (5) A prospective base adjustment, effective not later than July 1, 2018, of twenty percent  
30 (20%) of the current base rate for home-care providers, home nursing care providers, and hospice  
31 providers contracted with the executive office of health and human services and its subordinate  
32 agencies to deliver Medicaid fee-for-service skilled nursing and therapeutic services and hospice  
33 care.

34 [\(6\) A base adjustment, effective not later than July 1, 2021, of sixteen-point-twenty-nine](#)

1 percent (16.29%) of the current base rate for home care providers, home nursing care providers,  
2 and hospice providers contracted with the executive office of health and human services, its  
3 subordinate agencies and contractors to deliver Medicaid personal care attendant and homemaking  
4 services to beneficiaries.

5 (7) A base adjustment, effective on the same date as any wage increases implemented by  
6 the executive office of health and human services or within a collective bargaining agreement for  
7 any person working for a program under §§ 40-8.14 and 40-8.15 of a multiple of one-point-forty-  
8 two percent (1.42%) of the current base rate for home care providers, home nursing care providers  
9 and hospice providers contracted with the executive office of health and human services, its  
10 subordinate agencies and contractors to deliver Medicaid personal care attendant and homemaking  
11 services to beneficiaries.

12 (8) A base adjustment, effective not later than July 1, 2021, of ten percent (10%) of the  
13 current base rate for home care providers, home nursing care providers and hospice providers  
14 contracted with the executive office of health and human services, its subordinate agencies and  
15 contractors to deliver Medicaid personal care attendant services, skilled nursing care and  
16 therapeutic services and hospice care to beneficiaries that reside in a municipality as identified by  
17 the office of primary care and rural health within the department of health.

18 (9) A base adjustment, effective not later than July 1, 2021, of ten percent (10%) of the  
19 current base rate for home nursing care providers and hospice providers contracted with the  
20 executive office of health and human services, its subordinate agencies and contractors to deliver  
21 Medicaid skilled nursing care to beneficiaries that have tracheotomies or use ventilators.

22 ~~(6)~~(10) Effective upon passage of this section, hospice provider reimbursement,  
23 exclusively for room and board expenses for individuals residing in a skilled nursing facility, shall  
24 revert to the rate methodology in effect on June 30, 2018, and these room and board expenses shall  
25 be exempted from any and all annual rate increases to hospice providers as provided for in this  
26 section.

27 ~~(7)~~(11) On the first of July in each year, beginning on July 1, 2019, the executive office of  
28 health and human services will initiate an annual inflation increase to the base rate for home-care  
29 providers, home nursing care providers, and hospice providers contracted with the executive office  
30 and its subordinate agencies to deliver Medicaid fee-for-service personal care attendant services,  
31 skilled nursing and therapeutic services and hospice care. The base rate increase shall be a  
32 percentage amount equal to the New England Consumer Price Index card as determined by the  
33 United States Department of Labor for medical care and for compliance with all federal and state  
34 laws, regulations, and rules, and all national accreditation program requirements. All Medicaid

1 [programs operated by the executive office of health and human services, its subordinate agencies](#)  
2 [and contractors shall not reimburse home care providers, home nursing care providers and hospice](#)  
3 [providers less than fee-for-service rates.](#)

4 (g) The executive office shall implement a long-term-care-options counseling program to  
5 provide individuals, or their representatives, or both, with long-term-care consultations that shall  
6 include, at a minimum, information about: long-term-care options, sources, and methods of both  
7 public and private payment for long-term-care services and an assessment of an individual's  
8 functional capabilities and opportunities for maximizing independence. Each individual admitted  
9 to, or seeking admission to, a long-term-care facility, regardless of the payment source, shall be  
10 informed by the facility of the availability of the long-term-care-options counseling program and  
11 shall be provided with long-term-care-options consultation if they so request. Each individual who  
12 applies for Medicaid long-term-care services shall be provided with a long-term-care consultation.

13 (h) The executive office is also authorized, subject to availability of appropriation of  
14 funding, and federal, Medicaid-matching funds, to pay for certain services and supports necessary  
15 to transition or divert beneficiaries from institutional or restrictive settings and optimize their health  
16 and safety when receiving care in a home or the community. The secretary is authorized to obtain  
17 any state plan or waiver authorities required to maximize the federal funds available to support  
18 expanded access to home- and community-transition and stabilization services; provided, however,  
19 payments shall not exceed an annual or per-person amount.

20 (i) To ensure persons with long-term-care needs who remain living at home have adequate  
21 resources to deal with housing maintenance and unanticipated housing-related costs, the secretary  
22 is authorized to develop higher resource eligibility limits for persons or obtain any state plan or  
23 waiver authorities necessary to change the financial eligibility criteria for long-term services and  
24 supports to enable beneficiaries receiving home and community waiver services to have the  
25 resources to continue living in their own homes or rental units or other home-based settings.

26 (j) The executive office shall implement, no later than January 1, 2016, the following home-  
27 and community-based service and payment reforms:

28 (1) Community-based, supportive-living program established in § 40-8.13-12 or an  
29 alternative, successor, or substitute program, or delivery option designated for these purposes by  
30 the secretary of the executive office of health and human services;

31 (2) Adult day services level of need criteria and acuity-based, tiered-payment  
32 methodology; and

33 (3) Payment reforms that encourage home- and community-based providers to provide the  
34 specialized services and accommodations beneficiaries need to avoid or delay institutional care.

1           (k) The secretary is authorized to seek any Medicaid section 1115 waiver or state-plan  
2 amendments and take any administrative actions necessary to ensure timely adoption of any new  
3 or amended rules, regulations, policies, or procedures and any system enhancements or changes,  
4 for which appropriations have been authorized, that are necessary to facilitate implementation of  
5 the requirements of this section by the dates established. The secretary shall reserve the discretion  
6 to exercise the authority established under §§ 42-7.2-5(6)(v) and 42-7.2-6.1, in consultation with  
7 the governor, to meet the legislative directives established herein.

8           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- MEDICAL ASSISTANCE--LONG-TERM CARE  
SERVICE AND FINANCE REFORM

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1           This act would provide for Medicaid home care, home nursing care and hospice base rate  
2 adjustments for services delivered by professionals and paraprofessionals licensed by the  
3 department of health to meet the increasing demand for services for medically-complex and rural  
4 patients and to meet the need to grow and sustain the licensed nurse assistant workforce. This act  
5 would support the state's long-term care rebalancing goals by keeping high-acuity or high medical  
6 necessity patients out of skilled nursing facilities and hospitals and remain safe at home and in the  
7 community with highly-trained and stable long-term services and support.

8           This act would take effect upon passage.

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