



**Testimony Re: H-5200 Related to DHS Budget, Medicaid  
Redeterminations  
Senate Finance Committee  
March 21, 2023  
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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for DHS resources and funding to support the upcoming Medicaid redetermination process (often called unwinding). During the COVID-19 public health emergency, states were required to maintain Medicaid coverage for most enrollees. On April 1, 2023, states will begin reviewing all Medicaid enrollees' eligibility and end coverage for those found ineligible.

**The Department of Human Services has a key role in this process in determining health care eligibility and supporting state efforts to ensure that Rhode Island children and families do not unnecessarily lose health insurance coverage during this process.** The Governor's proposed budget for FY 2024 includes several budgetary items to support this process.

- Includes \$372,000 (\$206,000 in state general revenue) to hire three appeals officers for the expected high volume of eligibility appeals needs during the redetermination process to separate oversight from eligibility tasks.
- Within the Department of Human Services, the Governor recommends a total of \$6.6 million in general revenue financing, \$11.7 million from all sources of funds, for the United Health Infrastructure Project (UHIP) system to support redetermination activities during the unwinding phase of the public health emergency.

The budget does not yet include funding for compliance with federal conditions and regulations required by the *Consolidated Appropriations Act* that was signed into law on December 29, 2022, but notes that the Governor will be submitting an amendment to reflect these changes, including mandatory 12-month continuous coverage for children enrolled in Medicaid starting January 2024 and changes to Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage (FMAP) enhancements which will gradually decrease.

### **Importance of Medicaid Redeterminations for Rhode Island Children and Families.**

- With the majority of the children in Rhode Island (56%) receiving their health insurance through Medicaid/RIte Care today, children have much at stake during the redetermination process. The number of Rhode Island Children with Medicaid/RIte Care grew by 9% during the COVID-19 continuous coverage provisions.
- Nationally it is estimated that as many as 6.7 million children are at risk of losing coverage during the unwinding. Most children (72%) losing coverage will remain eligible for Medicaid but are likely to lose coverage due to bureaucratic challenges.
- It is important to support this process to limit coverage loss and gaps in coverage for children. Children are at grave risk of losing coverage inappropriately in states that do not dedicate the proper and needed resources to the determination process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today