Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care

Advancing quality healthcare at home

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

Home Care Industry Impact

Celebrating 35 Years of Advocacy, Leadership and Quality Care

By: Bethany Skinner, President

The Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care proudly celebrated its 35th Annual Meeting on September 11, 2025, at Chelo's Banquet Room in Warwick. Members, stakeholders and supporters gathered to honor the association's history, achievements and commitment to advancing quality home-based care. Board President Bethany Skinner welcomed attendees and reflected on 35 years of milestones, acknowledging both the victories in advocacy and the challenges ahead, including workforce shortages and regulatory burdens.

Executive Director Nicholas Oliver, MPA, CAE, delivered a powerful State of The Partnership Report. He highlighted historic Medicaid rate increases, up to 30 percent for skilled care and over 75 percent for personal care, defended against the elimination of the annual inflation factor and reported on OHIC's biennial review recommending increases of nearly nine percent across home care, therapy and hospice services. Oliver also addressed federal challenges, including Medicare cuts and the CMS "80/20 provision," while emphasizing the association's growing member benefits and new partnerships. He concluded with a call for continued unity and advocacy as the industry faces evolving challenges.

The program celebrated individuals who embody the spirit of home care. From the Rising Star Award presented to Luz Rodrigues of Amivie Hope Nursing Home Care, to the Heart of Home Care Awards honoring five exceptional caregivers, the evening spotlighted the dedication of professionals who make an extraordinary difference every day. Special recognition was given to Debra Driscoll, RN, President of Ocean State Nursing Services, with the Lifetime Leadership Award, and to Kathy Heren, LPN, retired Rhode Island Long-Term Care Ombudsman, with the Thomas A. Lamb Home Care Advocacy Award. The meeting also honored the memory of pediatric home care patient and advocate Liam Olson, who sadly passed earlier this year, with the Patient Advocacy Award. A moving tribute was made by Liam's classmate, Caelan Oliver, son of Executive Director Oliver, and the award was graciously accepted by Liam's parents, Eric and Karin.

The evening included live music by Kalifornia Karl, networking and a renewed sense of purpose. President Skinner thanked sponsors, honorees and members for their support and reaffirmed the association's commitment to advocacy, leadership and quality care. As The Partnership enters its 36th year, the membership remains united in advancing access and innovation in home-based care across Rhode Island.

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Fighting for a Rural Rate Add-On to Protect Home Care Access

By: Naomi Cotrone, Vice President

On July 29, 2025, the Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care called on Secretary Richard Charest and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to apply for the federal Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) under Section 71401 of H.R. 1, more commonly known as the *"One Big Beautiful Bill Act"*, urging the State to apply for federal funding to support home care in rural-like communities. The request included proposals to institute a rural add-on or rate modifier in Medicaid, to offset workforce, mileage and travel barriers, especially in areas including Washington County, northern Providence County, parts of Kent County and the East Bay, which all face access challenges.

Since that letter, state materials indicate that the State is moving forward under a somewhat new leadership and administrative structure for this grant opportunity. Currently, Rhode Island's RHTP application process is being led by an interagency team, which includes the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and EOHHS among other state partners. In other words, RIDOH is playing a central role in heading up the development of the State's plan and steering stakeholder engagement, instead of EOHHS as the state's centralized health and human services leadership agency and highest level cabinet member to the Governor.

The implications of this shift are meaningful for home care providers and advocates. With RIDOH more centrally involved, there may be greater alignment with public health perspectives, rural health definitions and perhaps higher priority given to access, prevention and infrastructure in Rhode Island's rural-like settings. This could enhance the chances that home care issues, such as travel burdens, workforce recruitment and retention, rate modifiers and incentives for serving underserved zip codes are included in the state's proposed plan to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for their review.

The RHTP presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with federal funds over five federal fiscal years (FFY 2026–2030). States may invest in workforce capacity, modern care delivery, technology and infrastructure without state matching dollars required. The RIDOH hosted community feedback sessions and solicited input to help shape Rhode Island's proposed plan. Home care providers participated in force to not only promote the rural add-on, but to mainly ensure that home care is front and center in Rhode Island's rural health transformation planning.

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Contact Your Trade Association!

Nicholas Oliver, MPA, CAE
Executive Director
Call: (401) 351-1010
Email: director@riphc.org

Navigating Your Challenges: Operating a Home Care Company in Rhode Island

By: Cheryl Levesque, Immediate Past President

The Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) released its SFY27 (State Fiscal Year 2027: July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027) recommendations to the General Assembly on September 1, 2025, covering more than 430 billing codes used across social and human service programs, including Medicaid-contracted services for home care, home health and hospice.

Home Care: OHIC recommended raising CNA personal care (S5125) from $10.40 to $11.33 per 15 minutes (+8.9%) and homemaker (S5130) from $10.07 to $10.97 (+8.9%). Differential add-ons for evenings, nights and holidays increased from $0.95 to $1.02 (+7.4%), while client acuity adjustments rose from $0.42 to $0.45 (+7.1%). Nursing assessment and evaluation (T1001) was recommended to rise from $185.33 to $201.12 (+8.5%), and private duty nursing (T1000) from $15.92–$21.75 to $17.33–$23.60 (+8.9%). These adjustments are intended to better reflect workforce costs and stabilize the home care labor market.

Home Health: Physical, occupational and speech therapy services (G0151–G0153) were recommended to increase from $38.12 to $41.63 per 15 minutes (+9.2%). The largest change was for home health and hospice aide services (G0156), rising from $10.07 to $24.08 per 15 minutes (+139%), correcting long-standing undervaluation of this role. The encounter rate (X0043) for nursing and therapy visits was recommended to increase from $152.49 to $177.06 (+16.1%), supporting access to skilled interdisciplinary care at home.

Hospice, OHIC applied consistent increases of about +9.2%. Clinical social worker visits (G0155) and RN visits (G0299) were recommended to rise to $18.36 per 15 minutes. Routine home care (T2042) increased to $283.14 per diem, continuous home care (T2043) to $73.44 per hour, inpatient respite care (T2044) to $594.73 per day, and general inpatient care (T2045) to $1,274.15 per day. These adjustments recognize the resource intensity required to maintain a full continuum of end-of-life care.

The public hearing on these recommendations was held on September 26, 2025. Stakeholders, including leaders from the home care industry through the Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care, shared testimony on the importance of aligning Medicaid reimbursement rates with the true cost of delivering care.

As Rhode Island enters 2026, it is critical that all Medicaid-contracted home care agencies remain engaged in advocacy through the Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care. Continued, united action will be necessary to ensure that policymakers adopt and sustain fair reimbursement structures that protect patient access, support the workforce and strengthen the future of care at home.

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Oppose the 2026 Medicare Home Health Cuts

By: Nicholas Oliver, MPA, CAE
Executive Director

The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has proposed a 9% cut in Medicare home health payments for 2026, reducing funding to Medicare-certified home health agencies by more than $1 billion nationwide. For Rhode Island, this would have devastating consequences for older adults and people with disabilities who rely on home health services to remain safely at home.

These cuts come at a time when access is already strained. Thirty-four percent of Rhode Island patients referred to home health after hospitalization never received it due to workforce shortages and capacity constraints. Since 2019, approximately 6,173 Rhode Islanders have already lost access to home care as agencies shut down or scaled back. CMS's flawed methodology fails to address fraud and abuse while unfairly penalizing legitimate providers and patients are paying the price.

When home health is unavailable, patients are more likely to end up in the emergency department or be readmitted to the hospital. Research shows that without timely home health services, readmissions increase by 35%, emergency room visits rise 16%, mortality rates climb 43%, and overall spending grows by 5.4%. Cutting home health not only jeopardizes lives, it drives up healthcare costs and pushes patients into more expensive institutional care.

We are calling on Congress to oppose the proposed 2026 Medicare Home Health Final Rule and to urge CMS to rescind these cuts. Instead, lawmakers should support legislation that strengthens, not weakens home-based care services, the preferred setting for patients and the most cost-effective option for the Medicare trust fund.

The Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care will continue to advocate aggressively on behalf of our members and patients. However, success requires unity. Together, we must make sure policymakers hear clearly that home health care is essential, cost-effective and worth protecting.

save the **date**

36th Annual Meeting
Thursday, September 10, 2026

Advancing Local Value-Based Incentive Rates for Home Care

By: Kathleen Moren, RN, BSN, IBCLC,
Secretary-Treasurer

The Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care is leading a multi-year initiative to transform how commercial health insurance companies reimburse for home care services. This effort is focused on developing value-based purchasing (VBP) and data-collection incentive contracted rates, ensuring that reimbursement models reward quality outcomes, efficiency and innovation in care delivery.

At the core of the next steps of this project is a strategic collaboration with Corcoran, whose expertise in healthcare contracting and analytics has been instrumental in designing a framework that demonstrates the value of home care to commercial payors. Together, we are building data-driven contracting strategies that highlight the measurable cost savings, improved patient outcomes and reduced hospitalizations that come from expanding access to high-quality home care services.

Unlike traditional fee-for-service arrangements, these new models aim to incentivize providers for meeting benchmarks in patient satisfaction, reduced readmissions and effective chronic disease management. By aligning reimbursement with performance, The Partnership is positioning home care as an essential partner in Rhode Island's healthcare continuum, one that not only delivers compassionate care, but also strengthens system sustainability.

Importantly, this initiative is designed to exclusively benefit Provider Members of the Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care. Through these negotiated contracts, our members will have the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge reimbursement models that reward excellence and elevate the value of home care in the eyes of commercial insurers.

This multi-year project reflects The Partnership's long-standing commitment to ensuring fair, sustainable and forward-looking reimbursement for our members. As development continues, we look forward to sharing updates and engaging Provider Members in shaping the next chapter of value-based home care in Rhode Island.

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The Value of Membership: Advancing Rhode Island's Home Care Industry Together

The Rhode Island Partnership for Home Care (The Partnership) serves as the industry's voice for Rhode Island's licensed home care, home nursing care and hospice providers. As the only statewide trade association dedicated exclusively to home-based care, The Partnership empowers its Provider Members through advocacy, education, compliance support and exclusive benefits that strengthens companies, elevates care quality and sustains the dedicated workforce that supports Rhode Islanders in their homes and communities.

Partnering for Progress: The Value of Associate Membership

Associate Membership offers vendors, consultants and other stakeholders the opportunity to align with Rhode Island's only statewide trade association dedicated exclusively to advancing quality, access and sustainability in home-based care. Associate Members play a vital role in strengthening the industry through collaboration, innovation and shared commitment to serving patients, clients and families across Rhode Island.

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