



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NUMBER OF UNINSURED RHODE ISLANDERS CONTINUES TO DROP THANKS TO THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT**

*Rate of uninsured Rhode Islanders was 4.3% in 2016*

New data released by the Census Bureau today shows that the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is working in Rhode Island and the country. The percentage of

Rhode Island	2016	2015	2014	2013
Percent Uninsured	4.3%	5.7%	7.4%	11.6%
Number Uninsured	45,000	59,000	77,000	120,000

Source: US Census Bureau, Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2016

uninsured Rhode Islanders in 2016 was 4.3 percent, down from 5.7 percent in the previous year and less than half the 2013 rate, before the ACA went into effect. Rhode Islanders with incomes just above the federal poverty level became eligible for Medicaid for the first time under the ACA while those with higher incomes could purchase coverage through HealthSource RI, the state's health insurance exchange. Nationally, 8.6 percent of Americans were uninsured 2016, down from 14.5 percent prior to the ACA, despite the fact that twenty states chose not to expand Medicaid to their low-income single adult residents. Had they done so, the number of Americans without insurance would be significantly lower: the uninsured rate among "non-expansion" states was 11.7 percent, nearly double the 6.5 percent rate among states that expanded Medicaid.

"Thanks to the ACA more Rhode Islanders are able to get the comprehensive health care they need to become or stay healthy," said Linda Katz, Policy Director for the Economic Progress Institute. "Medicaid expansion has brought millions of dollars into our state, supporting our economy as a whole and our health care sector in particular. While we are headed in the right direction as a state and a country, the national data released today showing that the uninsured rate among Hispanic residents is close to three times that of Whites and for Black residents is close to double that of Whites tells us we need to do more to reduce disparities both in coverage and in care."

State	Total Uninsured (000s)	Percent Uninsured	US Ranking (1 = state with lowest share uninsured)
United States	27,304	8.6	
Massachusetts	171	2.5	1
Vermont	23	3.7	3
Rhode Island	45	4.3	6
Connecticut	172	4.9	7
New Hampshire	78	5.9	15
Maine	106	8.0	25

Source: US Census Bureau, Health Insurance Coverage in the United States, 2016

In 2016, Medicaid expansion allowed 65,000 single adults with income marginally above the poverty line to have health insurance coverage and allowed around 30,000 Rhode Islanders to purchase private insurance through HSRI. Almost 90 percent of these enrollees, those with income below four times the poverty level, qualify for federal tax

credits to help pay their monthly premium. In addition, the majority of enrollees (66%) who have income below two and half times the poverty level also receive assistance paying for out of pocket costs including co-pays and deductibles. The federal/state Medicaid program provides health insurance to over one in four Rhode Islanders. In addition to the 65,000 newly-eligible single adults, 153,000 children and families with lower income and 12,000 children with special health care needs have comprehensive insurance through Medicaid. Seniors (19,000) and people with disabilities (32,000) rely on Medicaid for basic health care and many rely on Medicaid for homemaker and other services they need to live safely in the community or in a facility when home-based care is not feasible.

Recent Congressional efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act would have ended Medicaid expansion and reduced the affordability and scope of coverage purchased through health insurance exchanges. Between 22 and 23 million Americans could have lost coverage. Proposals to cut and cap the Medicaid program would put residents as well as state fiscal stability at risk.

"As a state and as a country people spoke up to stop, at least for now, the push in Congress to "repeal and replace" the ACA", said Karen Malcolm, coordinator of the Protect our Healthcare Coalition. "Certainly, we need to work at the state and federal levels to do more to accomplish universal, affordable access so that all people get the health care they need for their physical and mental well-being. But just as certainly, scrapping the ACA and cutting Medicaid was a step backward, not forward, towards this goal."

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#### **About The Economic Progress Institute**

The Economic Progress Institute is a nonpartisan research and policy organization dedicated to improving the economic well-being of low- and modest-income Rhode Islanders. For more information visit [www.economicprogressri.org](http://www.economicprogressri.org).