

Report out from House Finance Committee Budget Meeting 6/9/2022

4. Circuit Breaker Property Tax Relief Enhancement. The House Finance Committee recommends increasing the income threshold for property tax credit or "circuit breaker" program eligibility from \$30,000 to \$35,000 and increasing the credit to \$600 beginning with tax year 2023. Both would grow by inflation beginning in tax year 2024. The property tax credit program provides relief through a system of tax credits and refunds to elderly and/or disabled Rhode Island residents who own or rent their homes. To be eligible, the homeowner or renter must not exceed the household income threshold and be at least 65 years old, or disabled and receive a social security disability benefit. This change would cost \$3.8 million annually.

19. ARPA - Health Care Facilities. The House Finance Committee recommends \$77.5 million from State Fiscal Recovery funds to support health care facilities in FY 2023. This includes \$45.0 million for hospitals, \$30.0 million for nursing facilities and \$2.5 million to be distributed to the community health centers through the Rhode Island Health Center Association.

43. Human Service Programs Rates and Benefit Analysis -OHIC The House Finance Committee recommends adding \$1.5 million from general revenues for a new initiative that requires the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner to conduct a comprehensive review of social and human service programs contracted or licensed by the state. This includes analysis of rates, utilizations, and eligibility and accountability standards.

65. Healthcare Workforce Support - Skills RI (GBA). The House Finance Committee concurs with the Governor's requested amendment to provide \$6.0 million from general revenues to support a healthcare workforce development initiative to address staffing shortages through recruitment efforts and talent development for existing staff. The program seeks to place 200 participants, including 100 new hires, in an employment-based training program through Skills for RI Future with the state's two largest hospital systems using employer subsidies, partnership support, and wraparound services for participants.

93. Enhanced Home and Community Based Support (GBA). The House Finance Committee concurs with the Governor's requested amendment to adjust federal funds and restricted receipts for the April 2022 spending plan submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to expand home and community-based support using the additional resources included in the American Rescue Plan Act. The amendment increases federal funds by \$8.4 million and restricted receipts by \$11.0 million for a total of \$67.0 million for FY 2023. The approved spending plan includes \$17.9 million to support children's behavioral health programs, \$1.1 million for First Connections, \$4.2 million for workforce development, \$2.5 million for housing programs, \$2.0 million to support expansion of

Certified Behavioral Health Clinics, and \$0.5 million for an oral health pilot program leaving \$33.3 million to be determined.

95. Home Health Agency Rates. The House Finance Committee recommends adding \$7.5 million, including \$3.3 million from general revenues, to increase reimbursement rates paid to home health agencies for certified nursing assistants and homemakers from \$13 and \$11 an hour, respectively, to \$15 an hour and includes employee costs related to this increase. Qualified homemakers provide general household tasks such as meal preparation and routine household care when the individual regularly responsible for these activities is temporarily absent or is unable to manage.

97. Independent Provider Model Rates. The House Finance Committee recommends adding \$0.3 million, including \$0.1 million from general revenues, to increase the rate paid for personal care aides through the Independent Provider Program from \$13.82 to \$15 an hour, or a 9.2 percent increase, and includes the employer-related expenses to bring the reimbursement rate to \$17.27. The program is a self-directed option allowing individuals living at home who need assistance with personal care and homemaker services to hire, schedule, and supervise a personal care aide to assist with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, toileting, eating, and transfers. This is consistent the proposal included in the Executive Office's FY 2023 budget request.

97. Long Term Care Rebalancing Support. The House Finance Committee recommends \$10.0 million, including \$5.0 million from general revenues, for the Executive Office to provide support for home care providers consistent with the long term care rebalancing provisions of state law. This could include retention and recruitment support, reimbursements for education and certification expenses, and new or renewed licenses.

108. Personal Choice Program Rates. The House Finance Committee recommends adding \$12.5 million, including \$5.5 million from general revenues, to increase reimbursement paid to home health agencies for personal care aides through the Personal Care Program by approximately 40 percent. Since home health agencies pay a range of employer-related expenses, this assumes the reimbursement rate will increase from \$17.17 to \$24.17, which includes employer costs. This is consistent the proposal included in the Executive Office's FY 2023 budget request.

146. SNAP Benefits Streamline Application. The Department has requested a waiver from the Federal Nutrition Service to streamline the application process for elderly and disabled individuals seeking Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. Assuming approval of the waiver, the House Finance Committee adds \$0.3 million from federal funds for benefit payments and \$5,000 from general revenues for outreach.