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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rhode Island receives \$112.8 million in additional federal funding for comprehensive eligibility portal

Nationally recognized UHIP replaces quarter-century old technology, will save over \$90 million per year

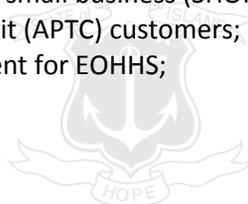
CRANSTON, R.I. (October 19, 2015) – The Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services announced today that it will receive nearly \$113 million in additional federal funding for the Unified Health Infrastructure Project (UHIP), a nationally-recognized technology system designed to streamline health and human service eligibility determinations and improve protections against waste and fraud. When fully launched next summer, the UHIP is estimated to save Rhode Island taxpayers over \$90 million per year (\$40.55 million in general revenue) through the more efficient delivery of service and improved fraud and waste prevention.

“We are laser-focused on making Rhode Island government work better, streamlining services and providing better outcomes and better value for all Rhode Islanders,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts. “This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build state-of-the-art technology infrastructure that will save Rhode Islanders money in the years to come. We are pleased that our federal partners see an opportunity to invest in Rhode Island. We will constantly monitor the UHIP development to ensure taxpayers are getting the quality results they deserve and demand.”

“Rhode Island is taking full advantage of expanded federal funding opportunities to build a 21st century health benefits exchange and eligibility system that serves our constituents more efficiently and roots out waste and fraud prevention efforts at the first point of contact,” said Health and Human Services Deputy Secretary for Administration Wayne Hannon, who serves as the chief financial officer of the UHIP effort. “We worked closely with the federal government to develop an application for additional functionality that will save taxpayers money over the long-run. Our federal partners’ approval of the entire application is a strong endorsement of our top priorities: improving government service, improving outcomes and delivering greater value.”

Since the project first launched in 2012, the state has leveraged additional federal funding opportunities and expanded UHIP to include more functionality, including:

- Improved renewal processes for small business (SHOP), Medicaid, qualified health plan (QHP) and advanced premium tax credit (APTC) customers;
- Electronic document management for EOHHS;



- Post-eligibility verification; and
- Creation of a worker portal for Health and Human Services program staff.

The \$112.8 million in federal funds approved this month will further those system requirements already under development. A sampling of additional functionality supported by the latest round of federal funds includes:

- Enhanced fraud prevention measures;
- Connectivity with the National New Hire Database and National Disqualification System;
- Improved lobby management to reduce wait times; and
- A single worker portal for all health and human services and healthcare programs.

The federal government required Rhode Island to update its aging eligibility system and the state has fully-leveraged unprecedented federal funding opportunities made available through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to build a more comprehensive system with better functionality than systems in many other states. Funding available through the ACA provides opportunities for the federal government to cover up to 90 percent of digital infrastructure costs. The federal government extended enhanced funding opportunities into 2016 to complete required updates and system improvements, saving Rhode Island taxpayers an additional \$56 million in state funds over the next two fiscal years for required infrastructure costs.

Phase I of UHIP launched in 2014 with HealthSourceRI and certain Medicaid eligibility functions. Phase II will launch next July and include the eligibility systems for social services offered by the Department of Human Services, including SNAP, the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and Medicare premium payments, among other services.

Rhode Island is a national leader in ACA technology development. HealthSourceRI was one of the few state exchanges to launch successfully and has enrolled over 36,000 Rhode Islanders in health plans. Last month, UHIP earned national recognition from the Center for Digital Government as one of the nation's best Government-to-Citizen technology systems. These digital systems have been a driving factor in Rhode Island's successful implementation of the Affordable Care Act and have played an integral role in cutting the state's uninsured rate by more than half since 2013.

The federal government gave initial approval to the state's entire application in late September. The final terms of the project, including required state budget proposals, were finalized only last week. The application process included months of discussions with federal partners up until the days prior to receiving approval. The additional \$112.8 million in federal funds requires an \$11.9 million investment in state general funds which must be approved by the Rhode Island General Assembly in a supplemental FY16 budget request.

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