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EOHHS Secretary Appoints Benjamin Shaffer as Permanent Medicaid Director

CRANSTON, RI – Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Womazetta Jones today named Deputy Secretary Benjamin Shaffer as the new Medicaid Director for the state of Rhode Island. Shaffer has been the Acting Medicaid Director since February, following the departure of Patrick Tigue. He will continue to serve as Deputy Secretary until that position is filled.

“The state is fortunate to have someone of Ben’s caliber who is able to step in and lead such a complex and vital program,” said Secretary Jones. “I am confident that his dedication to operational excellence, responsible fiscal management, and smart policy will enhance our Medicaid program by ensuring access to benefits, maintaining provider financial stability, and promoting provider-centric care with a focus on social determinants of health.”

Secretary Jones pointed to Shaffer’s leadership during the state’s response to COVID-19. During the public health crisis, Medicaid has submitted more than a dozen federal authority requests documents, containing more than 70 individual waivers. These steps have been critical to infusing millions of dollars into nursing homes, assisted-living, and group homes that are on the frontlines of the pandemic.

Shaffer had previously served as Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Medicaid Director at EOHHS, as well as Director of Performance Management for the state’s Office of Management and Budget. Prior to state service, he was a consultant at the Boston Consulting Group.

“I am honored to be taking this role to lead Rhode Island’s Medicaid program,” said Shaffer. “Through this public health emergency and beyond, my focus will be on ensuring access to benefits, maintaining the financial health of safety-net providers and their workers, and driving program and process improvements throughout our operation.”

Shaffer, who lives with his wife in Providence, earned a bachelor’s from Yale University, a master’s in public administration from Harvard University Kennedy School of Government and a master’s in business administration from the University of Pennsylvania’s The Wharton School.