



Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
74 West Road, Hazard Building, Cranston, RI 02920

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Mike Raia (OHHS)
401-462-1834 (o)
401-862-4603 (c)
Michael.Raia@ohhs.ri.gov

Rader Wallack Promotes Florio, McDonald to Deputy Medicaid Director Roles

Leadership changes to focus on Medicaid reform implementation and operations

CRANSTON, R.I. (March 9, 2016) – With a focus on successfully implementing a package of comprehensive and progressive Medicaid reforms which have positioned Rhode Island to manage costs without cutting eligibility or reducing benefits, Medicaid Director Anya Rader Wallack has appointed two experienced members of her staff as Deputy Medicaid Directors.

Deb Florio will oversee policy and program design to lead transformation in acute care, long-term care and behavioral healthcare. Darren McDonald will oversee Medicaid's operations, administration and finance.

"For years, Deb and Darren have worked tirelessly to ensure Rhode Islanders have access to high-quality healthcare. Having worked for Rhode Island's Medicaid program for more than a combined 20 years, they have an exceptional understanding of our programs and have been essential to building a strong foundation for reform," said Rader Wallack. "As Deputy Directors, Deb and Darren will play an important role to implement the ambitious reforms Governor Raimondo championed. The reforms protect important programs and eligibility standards while also providing the state with fiscal flexibility to make vital investments that expand opportunities for every Rhode Islanders."

"Under Governor Raimondo's direction and Anya's leadership, Rhode Island is transforming its Medicaid system to reward higher-quality care and better coordination," said Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts. "Since before we launched the Reinventing Medicaid effort last year, Deb and Darren have been vital to policy development and program implementation. In their new roles, they will help lead a Medicaid program that is well-positioned to build healthier communities, foster a more vibrant economy and transform healthcare delivery to be more efficient and effective."

Florio joined the Medicaid program in 1999 and most recently served as Medicaid Administrator and CHIP Director. In this role, she has been leading the state's efforts to implement the comprehensive Reinventing Medicaid reforms. Under her leadership, RItCare was named by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid as the nation's best Medicaid program for children and families. She has a master's degree in nursing and directed a home and hospice care program prior to joining the Rhode Island Medicaid program.



McDonald has been with the Rhode Island Medicaid program since 2012. Prior to his appointment as Deputy Director, he served as the Medicaid State Plan Coordinator and oversaw policy and federal compliance. McDonald led Rhode Island's successful implementation of Medicaid expansion, which played a significant role in cutting Rhode Island's uninsured rate in half between 2013 and 2015. Before his career in health policy, McDonald was a Captain in the U.S. Army.

One year after Governor Gina M. Raimondo established the Working Group to Reinvent Medicaid, Rhode Island is positioned to expand and improve access to quality care and reduce costs. The state is projected to achieve over \$100 million of annual Medicaid savings without cutting eligibility or reducing benefits. These reforms protect and expand vital health services and shift the state's Medicaid system toward a structure that rewards better outcomes, better coordination and higher-quality care.

In large part because of the state's participation in Medicaid expansion through the Affordable Care Act, Rhode Island has cut its uninsured rate in half since 2013. Ninety five percent of Rhode Islanders now have health insurance, including nearly 275,000 enrolled in Medicaid. While more Rhode Islanders are able to access coverage through the ACA and Medicaid expansion, Raimondo inherited a Medicaid program that was growing more rapidly than the rest of the state budget, which required immediate action.

Raimondo appointed Wallack as her Medicaid Director in [October](#).

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