FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 20, 2019

CONTACT: Karen Malcolm, Coordinator  
Email: protectrihealth@gmail.com / Phone: 401-585-9799 (mobile)

Rhode Island Advocacy Groups Condemn Appeals Court Ruling That Puts Health Care for Millions of Americans at Risk

Providence, R.I.—December 20, 2019— Members of the Protect Our Healthcare Coalition, twenty-four non-profit advocacy and community groups, condemned Thursday’s ruling by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals declaring the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) individual mandate provision unconstitutional. The Appeals Court did not decide whether the rest of the law needed to be struck down as well. Instead, the Court sent the case back to District Court Judge Reed O’Connor, who has already ruled in favor of striking down the entire ACA, to make this decision.

If the ACA were fully struck down, more than 124,000 Rhode Islanders could lose the health insurance coverage they currently have under Medicaid expansion or under coverage they purchase with tax subsidies through HealthSource RI. Moreover, critical protections for people with pre-existing conditions and the minimum insurance standards known as essential health benefits could be eliminated.

“While Rhode Islanders should be assured that their coverage under the ACA remains intact for 2020,” Karen Malcolm, Coordinator for the Coalition notes, “the attacks from the Trump administration are relentless and ongoing. This threat to the ACA is real. The General Assembly needs to get serious about protecting Rhode Islanders by enshrining the ACA’s consumer protections in state statute in case the conservative courts have their way. We need to fight back to protect gains under the ACA and to move forward in achieving guaranteed access to quality, comprehensive health care as a right for every American.”

“This most recent ruling threatens grave harm to the health security of Rhode Islanders and millions of Americans. We applaud our own Attorney General Neronha for his commitment, in partnership with twenty other attorneys general across the United States, to protect people’s access to quality, affordable health care by defending the ACA in court,” stated Linda Katz, Policy Director at Rhode Island’s Economic Progress Institute and Chairperson of the Coalition.

The Coalition works with the Congressional delegation to support their efforts to protect quality, affordable health care for all. It is also promotes state-level policies to protect Rhode Islanders by ensuring that the ACA’s consumer protections are enshrined in state law, to maintain and improve coverage and care through the Medicaid program and to ensure access to coverage through HealthSource RI.

# # #

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include: Economic Progress Institute, RI Health Center Association, Mental Health Association RI, RI NOW, RI Parent Information Network, NAACP Providence Branch, United Way of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood RI, SEIU Rhode Island Council, East Bay CAP, West Bay Cap, Foster Forward, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, Senior Agenda Coalition, RI Community Food Bank, U.S. Pain Foundation, Inc., Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), Thundermist Health Center

c/o the Economic Progress Institute, 600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue, Building #9, Providence, RI 02908