Protect Our Healthcare is a coalition of 23 leading Rhode Island organizations and hundreds of individuals with a mission to protect access to quality, affordable healthcare for all Rhode Islanders.

**Investments in safe, affordable housing are an investment in healthcare!** Significant data demonstrates that access to safe affordable homes is critical to improving health outcomes and an important component in managing health risk, quality of life, and overall ‘down-stream’ healthcare spending:

- Safe and affordable homes limit exposure to environmental toxins like lead and asthma triggers and reduce hazards such as to exposed wiring; in essence, making investments in housing an important up-front investment in health. ([https://www.housingworksri.org/Research-Policy/Focus-Areas-Economic-Development-Health-Education/Health](https://www.housingworksri.org/Research-Policy/Focus-Areas-Economic-Development-Health-Education/Health))
- Stable affordable housing has been shown to have a significant impact on other social determinants of health, including food insecurity. ([https://childrenshealthwatch.org/rx-for-hunger-affordable-housing/](https://childrenshealthwatch.org/rx-for-hunger-affordable-housing/))
- Affordable housing has been shown to contribute to a reduction in ‘downstream’ healthcare costs and to improved access to care. One study, conducted in 2015 by the Center for Outcomes Research & Education (CORE), found that, “When Medicaid-covered residents moved into one of the 145 affordable housing properties included in the study, their health care experiences changed dramatically. Over the following year, they used more primary care, had fewer ED visits, and accumulated lower medical expenditures than in the year before they moved in. Many also reported better access to and better quality of care.” ([https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/health-housing-exploring-intersection-between-housing-and-health-care-13360](https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/health-housing-exploring-intersection-between-housing-and-health-care-13360))

We believe that access to safe, affordable housing must be prioritized as a top public health initiative in Rhode Island, demonstrated by:

- Increased investment of general revenue funds in the development and preservation of safe affordable homes. Only one in four eligible Rhode Island households receives federal housing assistance and the state investment is the lowest per capita in New England.
- Improved state efforts to direct healthcare dollars towards housing. For example, pushing for approval from the Center for Medicaid Services for the home stabilization program. Require/encourage AE/ACOs to invest in housing production and early interventions to stabilize housing, including services and home modifications.
- Improved coordination between our healthcare delivery system (i.e. hospitals and accountable entities) and housing services.
- Required screening by accountable entities, hospitals, and others in the healthcare delivery system to better document social determinants of health – especially housing – as an important guide to statewide planning and investment.

**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, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), Thundermist Health Center

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