

Help Shape Rhode Island Health Care: Rhode Island's Health Care System Plan Comes to the Annual Conference

At this year's Annual Conference, state leaders will ask CTC-RI and our conference attendees to help inform their comprehensive health care system plan.

Every year, CTC-RI's Annual Conference brings Rhode Island's primary care community together to learn from each other. This year, **Ana Novais**, Assistant Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), and **Marti Rosenberg**, Director of Health Care System Planning at EOHHS will lead an interactive session on the state's Health Care System Plan—a roadmap for transforming Rhode Island's health care system over the next ten years.

Attendees will receive an overview of how the plan is being built and discuss some of its key priorities, including health care access, workforce development, and how services are coordinated across the state. Attendees will then be able to share their experiences and suggest implementation steps to inform the plan.

Ahead of the conference, we asked Marti and Ana a few questions about the plan and what it means for primary care.

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Tell us more about this plan

Like many states, Rhode Island's health care system is challenged by misaligned rates, workforce shortages, and disparities in access, quality, and outcomes for the most vulnerable communities. Over the last decade, policymakers, public officials, health care providers, community organizations, and other stakeholders across the state have increasingly recognized the need for comprehensive, system-wide planning. Accordingly, over the past two years, Rhode Island has built the foundation for that effort.



Assistant Secretary, EOHHS

Ana P. Novais



Director of Policy, Planning and Research, EOHHS

Marti Rosenberg

Our State Health Care System Planning (HCSP) Cabinet was established by [Executive Order](#) in 2024. With its aligned EOHHS Independent Advisory Council and supported by staff in the EOHHS Office of Health Care System Planning, the Cabinet takes a unified, interdepartmental approach to addressing these challenges.

Our planning work began with the research and writing of a [Foundational Report](#), describing in depth five system sectors and recommending action steps to strengthen them: Primary Care, Behavioral Health, Hospitals, Long-Term Care and Healthy Aging, and Health Related Social Needs. Then, in May 2026, the Cabinet and the Office of Health Care System Planning published their [report](#) on the second year of activity, which reports on the work of the Cabinet throughout 2025 and early 2026.

Now, with feedback and engagement from the Cabinet, the Advisory Council, and other interested community partners and residents, the Office of Health Care System Planning is tackling the most important component of the Executive Order: writing a long-term health care system plan. The plan is based on the Cabinet's goals, and has a set of SMART Objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) and Milestones. We have identified key metrics with which to measure our progress toward the objectives. And next, EOHHS will lead the development of 10-year targets that we will aim for, to show our success - along with a process that will allow us to evaluate and make changes when necessary. This approach allows Rhode Island to establish ambitious and measurable expectations while recognizing that responsible long-term planning requires the ability to learn and adjust.

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What have you heard so far from providers and communities that has shaped the plan?

Beginning in December of 2025, OHCS held six public meetings with the EOHHS Independent Advisory Council to review the six goals, clarify definitions, consider the implications of the Foundational Report, and chart a path toward the comprehensive Health Care System Plan. EOHHS presented the first draft of the plan to the Health Care System Planning Cabinet in early 2026, where the Cabinet reviewed it for its alignment with the community feedback gathered from 32 listening sessions across the state. These listening sessions brought together over 253 Rhode Islanders across fourteen distinct regions to discuss and identified barriers and successes and highlight their priorities

From these patients and providers, we heard issues about access, problems with timely appointments, and high cost. We heard about the desire for high quality care, and the wish from both providers and patients that they had more time with each other. We also listened to the desire for more alignment within siloed systems, and the need to address provider burn-out. The SMART Objectives in the plan look to address all of these components.

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How does the Rural Health Transformation Program connect to the plan, and what should practices know about it?

The Plan is being designed to align multiple components of our health care system. For instance, EOHHS used the Foundational Report recommendations, along with intensive stakeholder feedback to develop the successful RHTP application that is bringing \$156 million to Rhode Island for Year 1. At a high-level, Rhode Island's application sought funding within 5 goals - and you can see those goals reflected in the Foundational Report and the Cabinet's work:

- **Making Rural America Healthy Again** - Improve the Health of Rural Resident: This goal focuses on improving the health outcomes of Rhode Island's rural residents by targeting preventable chronic diseases, behavioral and mental health needs, substance use disorders, maternal and child health, oral health, and root causes of diseases.
- **Sustainable Access** - Expand Access to Comprehensive, Quality, Low-Cost Care: This includes expanding local access points for urgent, primary, behavioral, and specialty care services.
- **Workforce Development** - Strengthen the Rural Health Workforce: Building on existing workforce development efforts, we will strengthen and expand a robust, locally grounded rural health care workforce - ensuring that care is accessible, high-quality, and responsive to rural communities' needs.
- **Innovative Care** - Accelerate Value-Based and Affordable Care Models: Through the grant, we will advance comprehensive primary care practice transformation and support hospitals and primary care practices in transitioning to value-based payment.
- **Tech Innovation** - Integrate Technology into Rural Practice: This includes strengthening digital and Health Information Technology (HIT) infrastructure across Rhode Island's rural health system.