

# PROVIDERS' COUNCIL

## 2017-2018 Legislative Agenda

The Providers' Council surveyed its statewide human service membership on legislative priorities prior to the start of the session in January 2017. Our legislative agenda is based feedback and input from our members, our Public Policy Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Directors. The Council's three priorities for the legislative session are as follows:

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### **Access to the Group Insurance Commission**

*An act relative to access to health insurance for human service providers & employees*

**House Bill 1408 (Rep. Kay Khan) | Senate Bill 540 (Sen. John Keenan)**

This bill would allow providers to access the state's Group Insurance Commission (GIC) in an effort to increase options for buying health insurance products and controlling insurance costs. Accessing the large buying power of the Group Insurance Commission could allow employers and employees alike to receive more affordable prices on health insurance. The commission would allow workers to purchase its current contracted products or could purchase a specific product for human services organizations and workers.

**Status:** H1408 referred to Public Service; S540 referred to Financial Services (Jan. 2017).

### **Establish an education loan repayment program**

*An act establishing a loan repayment program for direct care human services workers*

**House Bill 116 (Rep. Jeffrey Roy) | Senate Bill 42 (Sen. Jennifer Flanagan)**

This bill would create an education loan repayment program for direct care workers. To be eligible, workers must be working a minimum of 35 hours per week, must have an individual income of no more than \$45,000 per year and must have maintained 12 consecutive months of employment in the sector. The program would allow workers to receive up to \$150/month – or up to \$1,800 per year – for a period not to exceed 48 months – or four years – to repay a qualified education loan that was used to attend an institution of higher learning.

**Status:** H116 and S42 referred to Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities (Jan. 2017).

### **Eliminate the pay disparity between human services workers**

*An act relative to fair pay for comparable work*

**House Bill TBD (Rep. Kay Khan) | Senate Bill 47 (Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry)**

This bill would set a schedule to fully eliminate the pay disparity between state workers and those employed by private, community-based human services nonprofits who are doing similar work. The bill would seek to eliminate the pay disparity no later than July 1, 2023, and it would authorize reports from the administration on the current pay disparity between workers and new strategies to recruit and retain human services workers at community-based nonprofits.

**Status:** S47 referred to Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities (Jan. 2017). House TBD.

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### **For more information:**

Contact Bill Yelenak at [byelenak@providers.org](mailto:byelenak@providers.org) or call 617.428.3637 x122