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"Everybody knows they're paying too much for their health care, and nobody knows why."

Erynn Petersen
Founder of Emme

Erynn Petersen, left, founder of Emme, works with a team member in the startup's Newport space on July 22.
PHOTOS BY DAVID DELPOIO/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

HEALTHY SAVINGS

Newport tech startup Emme helping families cut health care costs

Jonny Williams
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

If you feel like health care is increasingly becoming a luxury in Rhode Island, you are not wrong.

In 2024, the annual health insurance premium for a family was nearly $26,000, or about 28% of the median household income, according to the state Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner. To put it in context: As a rule of thumb, financial advisers recommend 28% of a household's income to be the maximum amount spent on a mortgage.

There is little respite in sight. Health insurers recently requested double-digit hikes for premiums in the fully-insured market, where about a third of Rhode Islanders get their coverage.

That's the news for those fortunate enough to have insurance coverage. Tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders are expected to lose access to Medicaid coverage because of the federal budget reconciliation bill passed by Republicans in Congress last year.

Faced with such growing costs and shrinking access, is there anything consumers can do to find affordable health care?

Petersen and her team in their Newport space. According to Petersen, Emme has helped Rhode Islanders save, on average, $5,000 annually.

Meet the health 'technologist' focused on saving money

Erynn Petersen is neither a financial adviser nor a health care policy analyst. She is, in her own words, a

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Judge: ICE held refugee illegally

Orders Cambodian man released immediately

Katie Mulvaney
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A federal judge this week ordered a Cambodian refugee to be released immediately from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention.

U.S. District Judge Mary S. McElroy on Aug. 4 ordered that Chansareth Hong, 50, a refugee who fled to the United States with his family as a child, be released after finding that authorities violated a settlement reached in a class-action lawsuit involving Cambodian refugees.

The agreement states that authorities are barred from detaining and deporting class members who have abided by their orders of supervision "unless ICE first served them with a written notice at least fourteen days prior to re-detention," according to the

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Panel backs return of embattled sergeant

Mark Reynolds
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Providence police sergeant who was accused of assaulting a handcuffed prisoner and later pleaded no contest to a simple assault charge is once again making progress in his long campaign to return to his job.

For the second time, a disciplinary panel convened under the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights has ruled that Sgt. Joseph Hanley can return to his job, following a period of training and "reintegration and onboarding" to begin within 10 days.

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