



April 14, 2026

House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island State House
HouseCorporations@rilegislature.gov

Re: Testimony SUPPORTING House Bill 8137

Dear Chair Solomon and Honorable Committee Members,

ABC-RI advocates for the rights and interests of Rhode Islanders in long-term care facilities and those receiving professional home care. We strongly support The Protect Our Healthcare Act, House Bill 8137. This bill would help stabilize Rhode Island's healthcare system in the wake of significant federal cuts by providing additional funds for uncompensated care.

Rhode Island is facing a healthcare crisis that is not of its own making. Federal Medicaid cuts and increasingly unaffordable insurance premiums are expected to double the state's uninsured population. Approximately 33,000 Rhode Islanders will lose Medicaid coverage, and another 20,000 are expected to lose coverage through HealthSource RI. Those people will not stop needing care. They will seek it from hospitals, community health centers, and free clinics, and without additional funding, those providers will not be able to absorb them.

Providers operating on thin margins who face a surge in uncompensated care will cut staff or close. An uninsured patient with no access to routine or specialist care will end up in an emergency room, at far greater cost to the system and to herself. The safety net that Rhode Island has built over decades could unravel quickly under this level of financial stress.

H 8137 addresses this directly. Modeled on similar initiatives in Massachusetts, New York, and other states, it would create a healthcare program for the uninsured that fills critical gaps: prescription drugs, imaging services, durable medical equipment, specialist care, and scheduled surgical services. It would strengthen existing providers so they can absorb new patients rather than turn them away.

The funding mechanism is straightforward. The state is projected to spend \$26.6 million less in FY2027 and \$54.8 million less in FY2028 on Medicaid due to lower caseloads driven by federal cuts. Those savings exist only because tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders lost coverage. They should remain dedicated to care for those same people.

We recognize there are many competing priorities this session, but this bill addresses a problem that will affect every corner of Rhode Island's healthcare system. We respectfully urge the committee to move H 8137 forward.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,
ABC-RI