



March 17, 2025

Representative McNamara
Chair, House Committee on Education
Rhode Island State Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair McNamara and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in my capacity as a subject matter expert in strong support of House Bill 5595, which would require all Rhode Island colleges to train residential life staff, including residence hall assistants, in recognizing and responding to an opioid overdose with naloxone. As the Director of the Community First Responder Program (CFRP) at the University of Rhode Island, I oversee the distribution of intranasal naloxone for community programs statewide and provide free overdose response training upon request.

College campuses are not immune to the opioid crisis and ensuring that residence hall staff are equipped with both knowledge and naloxone is a critical step in saving lives. Residential life staff are often the first to respond to emergencies in student housing, making it imperative that they are prepared to act swiftly in the event of an overdose. Naloxone is safe, easy to administer, and has been proven to reverse opioid overdoses effectively.

This legislation is not only a life-saving measure but also fiscally responsible. The Community First Responder Program is fully funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health, meaning that training and naloxone distribution can be provided at no additional cost to colleges or taxpayers. Our program stands ready to ensure that all residential life staff across Rhode Island have the necessary training and resources to respond to opioid overdoses.

By passing House Bill 5595, Rhode Island would demonstrate its continued commitment to public health and harm reduction. Expanding naloxone access and overdose response training

on college campuses is a proactive and necessary step in protecting students and ensuring safer learning environments.

I urge the committee to support this important legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. N. Jacobson", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anita N Jacobson, PharmD

Clinical Professor, University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy

Program Director, Community First Responder Program and Northeast Regional Rural Opioid
Technical Assistance Center