



Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Virks Building, 3 West Road, Cranston, RI 02920

February 8, 2024

Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chairman
House Committee on Finance
State House, Room 35
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Abney,

I am writing in strong support of the *Rhode Island Healthcare Workforce Data Collection Act*, which has been proposed in Article 3, section 15 of Governor McKee's recommended appropriations act.

To meet the increasing demand for quality health and human services, this section of the Governor's recommended budget would allow our state to quantify workforce shortages by collecting valuable workforce data through the health professional licensure application and renewal process at the Rhode Island Department of Health.

According to the National Governors Association, at least 28 other states use licensure data to understand their current and projected healthcare workforce gaps. The NGA reported that:

"Accurate health workforce data will help states achieve an appropriate balance of clinicians in the right settings and geographic locations to meet demand. It can also help states assess existing recruitment and retention policies and restructure incentives to address gaps."
(*Informing Health Care Workforce Policy by Leveraging Data*, NGA, November 2020)

If passed into law, the *Rhode Island Healthcare Workforce Data Collection Act* will expand the State's authority to collect data and require the information to be kept confidential, used only in the aggregate, to inform health system and workforce planning efforts.

More than 160 public and private sector organizations have participated with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor and Training, and the Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to make this a priority for our statewide health workforce planning initiative since April 2022.

I encourage and appreciate your favorable consideration for this important proposal to enhance the state's healthcare workforce planning capacity.

Sincerely,

Richard Charest, R. Ph., MBA
Secretary

CC: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel
Sharon Reynolds Ferland, House Fiscal Advisor
Joseph Codega, State Budget Officer

