



May 1, 2024

House Committee on Finance  
Rhode Island State House  
[housefinance@rilegislature.gov](mailto:housefinance@rilegislature.gov)

**Re: Testimony SUPPORTING House Bill 7493**, increasing the daily rate of payments to nursing facilities by twenty percent (20%) for single occupancy rooms to include private bathrooms.

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of House Bill 7493.

ABC-RI represents the rights and interests of residents of long-term care facilities in Rhode Island, and strongly supports H7493.

The pandemic highlighted the severe vulnerability of nursing home residents to infectious disease, and prompted a reevaluation of traditional nursing home setups, where double occupancy rooms with shared baths pose significant challenges for infection control. Moreover, sharing intimate aspects of life with a stranger violates the privacy and erodes the dignity of older adults or persons living with disabilities, unless it's their preference. A wealth of research indicates that single rooms reduce infection risks and enhance residents' physical and mental well-being.

It's time to reconsider our approach to nursing home care. The current institutional model is outdated, resembling decades-old hospital designs. We need to align with current research and best practices. The proposed twenty percent increase per diem incentivizes nursing home operators to transition to or expand private room options.

The National Academies Report on improving nursing home quality recommends creating smaller, more home-like environments within larger facilities to prioritize infection control and person-centered care. It suggests state licensure should mandate single-occupancy bedrooms with private bathrooms for most, if not all, residents. This vision should guide the future of nursing homes, and H7493 is a step towards realizing it.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for all of your work on behalf of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,  
ABC-RI