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Apr 29, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney, Chairman

Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
State of Rhode Island
82 Smith Street, Room 35
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Abney,

My name is Elianeibel Escolastico, and I serve as the Billing Specialist at Good Shepherd Home Care. But long before I worked at a desk, I worked at the bedside — as a medical assistant and a certified home health aide. I have drawn blood, helped patients dress, translated for Spanish-speaking elders, and sat with clients while they cried. Today, I work behind the scenes, making sure the billing is accurate, the claims are processed, and that the system doesn't forget about the very people keeping it alive.

This is why I am writing to urge you to support **House Bill 5774** and **Senate Bill 255** in the FY2026 state budget. These measures are not abstract policies to me. They are protections for a workforce I once belonged to — and for the coworkers I now fight for every day.

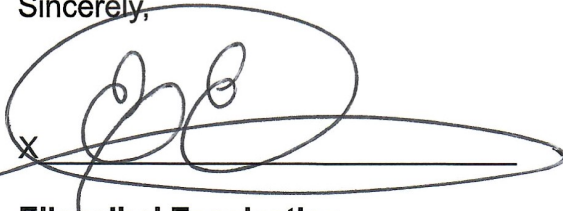
I see the numbers. I see the delay in reimbursements, the way rates get chipped away by third parties, the panic when funding structures change. Behind every billing code is a human being who showed up to work — and behind every rate cut or policy rollback is a caregiver wondering what it will mean for their stability, their family, and the life they're trying to build.

The **Medicaid rate floor** is necessary to keep agencies like ours from being undercut and destabilized. Without it, providers are forced to make impossible choices — and the quality of care inevitably suffers. The **\$1.56/hour behavioral health wage enhancement** is just as critical. Caregivers who go through that training are better equipped, more confident, and more likely to stay in this field. Taking that away is not just a loss of income — it's a loss of respect.

I may no longer wear scrubs, but I will never forget what it felt like to show up every day with my whole heart and still feel overlooked. The workers we serve and support deserve better. They deserve protection, fair compensation, and the assurance that their work matters.

Please include House Bill 5774 and Senate Bill 255 in the FY2026 budget. Let these bills reflect not just financial strategy, but human value.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized cursive letters, is written over a horizontal line. The signature is enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval. A small 'X' is marked on the line to the left of the signature.

Elianeibel Escolastico
Billing Specialist
Good Shepherd Home Care