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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 Julie Caraballo. I am a Registered Nurse serving as a clinical leader in home care, where I work closely with Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and homemakers every day. I am writing to urge your support for **House Bill 5774** and **Senate Bill 255**, which I believe are absolutely critical to preserving the dignity, safety, and stability of home care in Rhode Island.

As an RN, I oversee patient care plans, supervise direct care workers, and support families during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. But the truth is: **none of this care would be possible without the CNAs and homemakers who carry out the daily work in the homes.** These caregivers are the eyes, ears and hearts of our care system — the ones who report a change in condition, prevent falls, provide emotional support, and maintain the fragile connection between our patients and the outside world.

We have seen what happens when the system fails them. When wages are cut, the workers leave. When they leave, patients suffer. And when patients suffer, families break. In previous employment experiences, I've seen CNAs skip lunch to finish their routes. I've seen homemakers walk long blocks in winter storms because the person they care for has no one else.

The **\$1.56/hour wage enhancement** for those who completed the state's behavioral health training is more than just a line item. It represents recognition, motivation, and retention. It rewards skill, encourages professional development, and says, "We value your work." Without it, we send the opposite message. These caregivers are already some of the most underpaid in healthcare — and yet, they're trusted with the physical and emotional well-being of our most complex patients.


Preserving this wage enhancement — and enshrining a **Medicaid rate floor** — would not only stabilize the current workforce, it would strengthen the future of home care in Rhode Island. Because let's be honest: it is not hospitals or institutions that are holding up the care system right now. It is the women and men who walk into homes each day, often invisible to the public, but vital to the patients they serve.

Please don't let these workers fall through the cracks. Please don't let this funding expire.

I respectfully ask that you include **House Bill 5774** and **Senate Bill 255** in the FY2026 budget.

Thank you for listening — and for standing with the caregivers who make home care possible.

Sincerely,
Julie Caraballo, RN

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Director Of Nursing Services
Good Shepherd Home Care