



April 29, 2025

The Honorable Representative Martin Abney
House Finance Committee, Chair
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: House Bill No. 5775 – Relating to Human Services – Medical Assistance

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee:

Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island (MOWRI) formally voices its support for the passage of House Bill Number 5775 – Relating to Human Services – Medical Assistance.

MOWRI is dedicated to meeting the nutritional and social needs of Rhode Islanders to help them maintain safe and independent lifestyles. Since 1969, we have served more than 21-million home-delivered meals in Rhode Island. In 2022, we expanded our work to include “Food is Medicine” services, offering medically tailored meals, supplemental grocery delivery and nutrition counseling to individuals managing chronic illnesses.

A recent article in the April 2025 edition of *Health Affairs* projects significant healthcare cost savings associated with the use of medically tailored meals. It is estimated that Rhode Island could realize the net savings of approximately \$2,500 per patient as one hospitalization is prevented for every four patients receiving medically tailored mealsⁱ. This intervention not only lowers healthcare costs among high-risk populations but also tackles key social determinants of health by improving access to nutritious food and supporting overall well-being.

This bill requires the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to establish a one-year pilot program for nutritional assistance -- including medically tailored meals, groceries and produce for people with diet-related diseases or food insecurity, and other interventions where there is a clinical need. This legislation would enable MOWRI to extend our work in the Food is Medicine space and produce crucial data on effectiveness, scalability, and cost-effectiveness of the intervention that could be used by EOHHS to inform future planning.

Passage of this bill would acknowledge the vital role of nutrition in preventing, managing, and treating chronic disease. It supports integrating healthy food access into healthcare systems and acts as a catalyst—testing innovative, food-based healthcare solutions that can transform the way our state treats diet-related diseases. We respectfully urge your support for this important legislation.

Please feel free to contact me at mgrady@rimeals.org or (401) 351-6700 to discuss this matter further. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Meghan Grady
Executive Director

CC: Christopher O'Brien, Committee Clerk

ⁱ Deng, S., Hager, K., Wang, L., Cudhea, F. P., Wong, J. B., Kim, D. D., & Mozaffarian, D. (2025). Estimated impact of medically tailored meals on health care use and expenditures in 50 US states. *Health Affairs*, 44(4), 433–442. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2024.01307>