

BILL 5988

Hello everyone,

My name is Ariana Raufi and I have been a pediatrician here in Rhode Island for almost 7 years. I was born and raised in RI and went to Brown University for undergrad and medical school. I did my residency training in Chicago and when I finished, I started looking for jobs closer to home in both RI and Mass. The job search was my first glimpse into the financial plight of pediatrics in RI.

My mom, Dr. Angela Grenander, has been a pediatrician here in RI for over 40 years. She co-founded a private pediatric practice in Barrington with Dr. Jane Dennison in the 1980s. My dream was always to come back home and work with my mom, ^{and had to make} but I made a large financial sacrifice to take a job at her practice in order to fulfill this dream rather than working in Massachusetts for higher pay.

Over the past 7 years that I have been in RI, I have experienced the crisis of primary care first hand.

- I frequently have new patients tell me that before calling us, they called 15 other practices, none of which were accepting new patients.
- I get numerous messages on our social media pages every month from parents asking if we can take their children on as patients.
- I have patients who drive almost an hour to come see us for appointments - and this is a very small state!
- I have patients who move here from other states and ask why there are so few primary care doctors for children and adults in this state.
- I routinely see patients over 22 years old who cannot find an adult doctor.
- I have parents of patients ask me all the time if I know of any adult doctors taking new patients.
- We are having a hard time retaining staff due to pay differences in other states - We recently had 2 MAs transfer to practices in Mass because they were offered higher pay.
- In 2022, we offered a position to a new grad pediatric resident who trained in South Carolina and was moving back home to Rhode Island. Due to salary differences, she took a job just over the border in Swansea instead.

I love pediatrics, and I love Rhode Island, but it has been so frustrating working in a state that doesn't ^{seem to} support its people. My husband works in Boston, and I have recently considered relocating my practice to Mass. If something doesn't change, I can't guarantee that I can continue to work here. As one of the youngest pediatricians in this state, I had hoped to dedicate my entire career to the children of RI. How can we possibly attract and retain primary care providers in a state that does not ^{seem to} value the work that we do?

As you may or may not know, no one goes into pediatrics to get rich. This isn't about our wallets. This is about the children. We are just trying to get the payments we have always deserved in order to continue to provide exceptional care to the children of this state. We can't give help if we don't get help.

Thank you for your time,
Ariana