



April 30, 2025

Dear members of the Rhode Island House Finance Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the discussion related to **Bill H5988**. Thank you for your time in considering this bill.

I have been a community pediatrician in Rhode Island since completing my pediatric residency at Hasbro Children's Hospital in June 1998. I am currently the owner of East Side Pediatrics where we employ 5 pediatricians. We accept all insurances as we aim to provide care for all.

Since 2008, when East Side Pediatrics opened for business, we had grown to become a thriving practice. We are now struggling. Though there are myriad factors contributing to this, subpar Medicaid funding compared to our neighbors plays a central role. Neighborhood Health Plan/Rite Care and Medicaid make up more than 33% of our patient panel. Less incoming money has made it more difficult to retain providers and hire new providers. We have placed ads for a new provider since May 2023. The quality applicants have taken jobs in Massachusetts or in larger systems of care.

East Side Pediatrics is part of the Brown Medicine/CPP ACO, where Anchor Medical Associates had also been affiliated. Though the difficult negotiations related to our ACO may not seem directly relevant to Bill H5988, I think Anchor Medical Associates clearly demonstrates the fragility of pediatric primary care in Rhode Island. **I am so worried that we will continue to struggle without immediate financial relief.**

We do not have the financial health to easily hire a new doctor. But we need a new doctor to serve our patients and attract transferring patients, and to build our practice back. So we've been stuck in this fragile state. The governor's new initiatives should help. But the passage of Bill H5988 would be an important step toward supporting the health and well being of the children of Rhode Island and the pediatric practices that care for them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William J. Morocco, MD  
President, East Side Pediatrics