

B. Joe Reddish, III

April 29, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney

Chair, House Committee on Finance

Via: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: Strong Support for H6046 – An Act Relating to Human Services – Medical Assistance

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of Wood River Health, I urge you to support **House Bill 6046**, critical legislation that strengthens Rhode Island's community health centers and protects the integrity of our Medicaid program. This bill is not just about reimbursement rates — it is about ensuring that over 200,000 Rhode Islanders continue to have access to high-quality, cost-effective, and community-centered care.

Community health centers are the **foundation of Rhode Island's primary care safety net**. They are **the only providers legally required** to:

- Serve all patients, regardless of their ability to pay
- Report clinical quality data publicly and annually
- Be governed by patient-majority boards to reflect the needs of the communities they serve

These centers are more than healthcare facilities—they are lifelines. At Wood River Health alone, we cared for over **10,400 unique patients in 2024**, many of whom would otherwise have no access to care.

House Bill 6046 is essential because it addresses two urgent needs:

1. **It updates outdated language** in Rhode Island General Law 40-8-26 to reflect the comprehensive care that community health centers now provide—**not only medical services but also behavioral and dental care**, which are integral to whole-person health.
2. **It establishes a sustainable Medicaid payment floor.** Today, Medicaid reimbursement covers just **85% of the cost** of providing care—a drop from 98% in 2019. This growing gap threatens the viability of services for our most vulnerable populations. H6046 would ensure centers are paid either their reasonable costs or 125% of the statewide median, helping to stabilize the system for the long term.

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This is a smart investment. In 2024, the Congressional Budget Office reaffirmed that community health centers reduce costs to Medicaid and Medicare by decreasing emergency room use and hospitalizations. In short, **every dollar invested in community health centers returns greater value in both health outcomes and savings.**

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass House Bill 6046 and ensure its inclusion in the final state budget. Rhode Island's health depends on the strength and sustainability of its community health centers.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to a healthier Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Joe Reddish, III', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

B. Joe Reddish, III
Board Member - Treasurer
Wood River Health

401.474.8077