

May 7, 2025



RI Department of Health  
Three Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908-5097

TTY: 771  
[www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov)

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H 5076 – Budget Article 10 - Governor's Budget Amendment #11 – Loan Repayments**

Dear Chair Abney:

I am writing in support of the Governor's Budget Amendment #11 of the FY 2026 Appropriations Act, relating to Health and Human Services. This amendment would result in changes to the Rhode Island Health Professional Loan Repayment Program. The Governor's Recommended budget includes additional funding totaling \$200,000 toward loan repayment assistance for primary care physicians and pediatricians. This funding would be matched by federal dollars and expand the program's reach. If passed by the General Assembly, this initiative would mark the first time since FY 2008 that general revenue would support this important public health program.

Healthcare professionals participating in the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program commit to working for at least two years in Rhode Island. Eligible participants include physicians, dentists, nurses, and behavioral healthcare providers. Data from 2013 to 2023 show that 91% of Rhode Island's Loan Repayment Program recipients continue to practice in Rhode Island after their service obligation is complete. More than 100,000 Rhode Islanders receive healthcare from a former or current program participant. By offering loan repayment assistance, the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program supports the recruitment and retention of high-quality, community-centered healthcare professionals who serve in federally designated Health Professional Shortage Areas.

In addition, the proposed budget amendment includes technical changes to provide for more effective administration of the program. The amendment officially updates language shifting program administration to the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and removes reference to the now defunct Higher Education Assistance Authority. Other changes provide RIDOH the authority and legal ability to recover loan repayments of recipients who are out of compliance with program requirements and charge penalty assessments.

It is for these reasons that I urge your favorable consideration of this critically important public health legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jerome M. Larkin".

Jerome M. Larkin, MD  
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy