



Testimony in Support of the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency

Submitted to the Rhode Island House and Senate

By Michael Fine, MD, and Margaret Gradie, PhD

Primary Care for All Americans

<https://primarycareforallamericans.org>

Dear Members of the Rhode Island House and Senate:

We write to offer information about the importance of the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. As leaders of *Primary Care for All Americans*, we are deeply committed to expanding equitable access to high-quality, community-based primary care for All Rhode Islanders. New residencies in Family Medicine are vital to achieving that goal. Such residencies immediately increase our primary care workforce today, as they train the future Rhode Island workforce for the future. Evidence shows that about 60 percent of residents will locate their practice within a few miles of their training site. I (Michael Fine) was trained at Memorial Hospital and developed a large practice less than two miles away. That practice still serves thousands of Rhode Islanders. That residency brought me to Rhode Island and started my journey here. I would not have come to Rhode Island without it.

Rhode Island, like much of the nation, faces a looming crisis in the primary care workforce. Even now, there are significant shortages in family medicine, particularly in communities like Woonsocket, where social and economic disparities are prevalent and access to care remains fragile. The creation of a new residency program rooted in a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) model is not only innovative but essential. It ensures that new physicians are trained within the very communities they are most needed, increasing the likelihood that they will remain and serve those communities for years to come.

Primary care is an essential service that all Rhode Islanders need. It is the only medical service that has ever been shown to improve the public's health while it helps control and contain health care costs.

The Thundermist Family Medicine Residency embodies the values we espouse at *Primary Care for All Americans*: it is community-based, equity-driven, and committed to the foundational principles of comprehensive, longitudinal primary care. This program will train physicians not just to treat illness, but to understand and address the social determinants of health, collaborate with interdisciplinary teams, and lead the transformation of health systems toward prevention and population health.

We commend the leadership of Thundermist Health Center for their vision and commitment. This residency will strengthen the health care safety net, cultivate the next generation of family physicians, and improve the health and well-being of Rhode Islanders for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Fine, MD

Margaret I. Gradie, PhD