



May 20, 2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
Via: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: H5526 - An Act Relating to Human Services -- Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

The Rhode Island Health Center Association strongly **supports** House Bill **5526**. HB5526 provides an immediate response to our state's primary care workforce shortage. If passed, the bill will fund the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program. Thundermist's program is a Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) Program. It will provide recent medical school graduates an opportunity to train in a community-based setting as opposed to an in-patient hospital-based environment. This program will have an immediate and lasting impact on the state's primary care workforce.

A 2022 study in the Journal of Graduate Medical Education found that graduates of THCGME programs were significantly more likely than graduates of other programs to practice within 5 miles of their training sites, to know how to care for patients with multiple health and social needs, and to maintain a broader scope of practice.

Thundermist's 3-year program is accredited and ready to be implemented. In the first year, they will accept four residents, adding an additional four residents in two subsequent years, for a total of 12 new doctors training at Thundermist each year. The program will enable Thundermist's capacity to increase by 3,000 to 4,000 patients.

There are multiple indications that our state's health care system is in crisis. HB5526 is a cost-effective investment that responds to the immediate crisis and establishes a foundation for a long-term solution.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Elena Nicolella

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The Rhode Island Health Center Association proudly supports::
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program
East Bay Community Action Program ~ Providence Community Health Centers
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action Agency
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health