



# RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY

Chairperson Marvin Abney  
House Finance Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 25H-5526

SUPPORT

May 20, 2025

Dear Chair Abney,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Medical Society, I write in strong support of H5526, which would appropriate \$500,000 annually to the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program. This investment is essential to sustaining and expanding a program that directly addresses one of the most urgent healthcare challenges facing our state: access to primary care.

Rhode Island is in the midst of a primary care crisis. The recent closure of Anchor Medical left over 25,000 patients seeking a new provider in an already overburdened system. Statewide, we face significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining primary care physicians, particularly in community-based and rural settings. Workforce shortages are compounded by stagnant reimbursement rates, high administrative burdens, and physician burnout — making programs like Thundermist's residency absolutely essential.

Family medicine residency programs are the single most effective pipeline for growing our primary care workforce. Research shows that physicians are far more likely to stay and practice in the communities where they train. Thundermist's program not only produces clinically excellent family physicians but also places them in the areas that need them most.

This bill is a strategic, forward-looking investment. It supports a training model that is community-focused, equity-driven, and responsive to Rhode Island's evolving healthcare needs. We urge the committee to fully fund H5526 to ensure that this program can recruit top candidates, expand clinical training opportunities, and continue producing the next generation of primary care physicians for our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kara Stavros, MD  
President