

May 19, 2025

House Committee on Finance
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: Support of House Bill No. 5526, Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Michael Souza, and I have the privilege of serving as Chief Executive Officer of Landmark Medical Center in Woonsocket. I am writing today to express my strong support for the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program and the Teaching Health Center model of physician training.

Landmark Medical Center is proud to partner with Thundermist on this important endeavor. Many of the clinical rotations for the Thundermist residents will occur within Landmark Medical Center, and we are excited to help train the next generation of family physicians right here in northern Rhode Island. Programs like this not only strengthen hospitals and health centers, but also improve access to care for the entire community.

We face a pressing and growing need for more primary care physicians, particularly in underserved communities like Woonsocket. By embedding physician training directly into community hospitals and health centers, Teaching Health Centers cultivate physicians who are more likely to stay and practice in these areas. Supporting this residency is a smart and strategic investment in the long-term health infrastructure of our state.

One of the most important benefits of the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program will be physician retention. Studies show that residents who train in community settings are significantly more likely to remain and practice in those same communities after graduation. This continuity is critical for improving patient care, building trusted relationships, and stabilizing the healthcare workforce in communities that need it most, like Woonsocket.

Thundermist and Landmark Medical Center have a long history of working together to address the healthcare needs of Woonsocket and Northern Rhode Island. We are proud to collaborate on several programs and are fully committed to the success of this residency program. Our shared vision is one where every Rhode Islander, regardless of background or income, has access to high-quality, compassionate primary care.

I respectfully urge you to support funding for the Thundermist Family Medicine Residency Program and Rhode Island's broader commitment to the Teaching Health Center model. Together, we can build a healthier, stronger future for all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Souza
CEO
Landmark Medical Center