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Honorable Chair Abney

House Finance Committee

State House

Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H5984

May 20, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 5980 which supports the creation of a primary care scholarship.

According to the RI Office of Healthcare Commissioner, "high quality primary care is the foundation of a high performing healthcare system."

Primary Care in RI is in crisis. Rhode Islanders are finding it harder to find a Primary Care Physician, often waiting months. Many of us are unable to take on more patients due to our already overfull patient panel.

Access to Primary Care decreases overall healthcare costs by supporting health maintenance, preventing and treating chronic diseases, and coordinating care. Primary Care leads to better healthcare outcomes in our communities.

In 2023, medical students amassed \$200,00 of loans for their education. Medical students may enter school with the intention of becoming a Primary Care Physician but are dissuaded by the amount of debt they will have to pay back. Primary Care Physicians, while the foundation of a high-performing healthcare system, are among the lowest paid specialties.

Creating a Primary Care Scholarship with the requirement of a long-term commitment to practice in RI is one piece of the solution to address the current severe shortage of Primary Care healthcare professionals.

I respectfully ask the Committee to support House Bill 5984 to increase access to highly needed Primary Care in RI.

Sincerely,

Lisa Menard-Manlove, MD, FAAFP, MHM

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