



May 20, 2025

Chair Marvin L. Abney

House Committee on Finance

Rhode Island House of Representatives

State House Room 35

Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for House Bill H-6289 – Long-Term Care Service and Finance Reform**

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

On behalf of LeadingAge Rhode Island and the mission-driven, not-for-profit aging services providers we represent, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill H-6289, introduced by Representative Katherine Kazarian.

This important legislation strengthens Rhode Island's commitment to rebalancing our long-term care system by prioritizing home- and community-based services (HCBS), which are both cost-effective and preferred by older adults. In particular, we strongly support the provision in Section 40-8.9-9(n), which raises the Medicaid reimbursement rate by 13% for Tier C services—those provided to the most complex residents in assisted living communities—effective January 1, 2026.

This modest yet strategic investment is essential to ensuring the sustainability of providers like Aldersbridge Communities, a mission-driven nonprofit that cares for older adults who live on Medicaid and would otherwise be homeless or require costlier institutional care. Unlike high-end, private-pay assisted living settings, Aldersbridge serves Rhode Islanders with significant behavioral health and cognitive needs, including dementia. These residents would likely end up in nursing homes or hospitals at significantly higher cost to the state without providers like Aldersbridge.

To illustrate the fiscal prudence of H-6289: for each Medicaid-eligible resident Aldersbridge transitions from a nursing home to its assisted living communities, the state saves an estimated \$43,800 annually. The overall cost of the proposed rate increase is estimated at under \$300,000 per year, a figure that would be fully offset if just seven residents are transitioned from nursing homes. At present, Aldersbridge has 12 such residents and five more on a wait list.

Furthermore, this enhanced rate structure reflects reimbursement levels already recognized by Neighborhood Health Plan, acknowledging the higher level of care and oversight required for Tier C residents. It will also provide critical financial support for fulfilling collectively bargained wage increases, such as the \$1.25/hour raise Aldersbridge has committed to paying its SEIU 1199 workforce, despite no corresponding increase in Medicaid rates for assisted living settings.

At a time when the need for affordable, community-based care is growing and Rhode Island's aging population continues to rise, this bill provides both fiscal responsibility and compassion. Passage of H-6289 will preserve and potentially expand access to high-quality, low-cost assisted living services while preventing unnecessary institutionalization.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass this bill and ensure its inclusion in the FY2026 state budget. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued support of Rhode Island's seniors and the providers who serve them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'F. McMahon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Francis X. McMahon, Esq.**

LeadingAge Rhode Island