



Honorable Chair Abney of the
House Finance Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for H7408

February 3, 2026

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Kate de Klerk, I am a Family Medicine physician, and I am writing to you on behalf of the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians (RIAFP) in strong support of House Bill 7408.

The RIAFP strongly supports the plan outlined in H7408 to help secure the financial viability of Roger Williams Medical Center and Our Lady of Fatima Hospital. These hospitals play an indispensable role in providing critical healthcare services, including emergency care, inpatient treatments, and outpatient services, particularly to underserved and vulnerable populations. Their continued operation is vital not only for patient care but also for the health and economic stability of our communities.

The RIAFP represents over 300 Family Medicine physicians in Rhode Island, the majority of whom work as primary care physicians. The closure of these hospitals would be hugely detrimental to the patients that we serve who routinely receive care there, but also to the physician workforce that we represent. Closure of these hospitals will undoubtedly mean that patients don't receive necessary care and experience delays in their care, but it will also mean that aspects of this care gets shifted onto primary care practices, and there simply is not capacity for it in the state.

The proposed financial support through the debt service reserve fund ensures that these essential hospitals can transition to new ownership under CharterCARE Health of Rhode Island, Inc., protecting 2,700 jobs and preventing further disruption to healthcare services. This bill is a proactive step in preserving vital healthcare infrastructure in our state, safeguarding public health, and ensuring that our most at-risk residents continue to have access to high-quality care.

It also ensures that other parts of the healthcare system will not be overwhelmed by a sudden influx of new patients seeking care, a scenario that would threaten the stability of the healthcare system across Rhode Island. I respectfully urge you to support H7408.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katharina de Klerk, DO
Advocacy Chair, Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians