

March 24, 2026 (World TB Day)

Rhode Island House of Representatives
Chairman Marvin Abney
House Finance Committee
State House
Providence, Rhode Island

RE: Support for Restoring Funding – Department of Health Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic

Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

My name is E. Jane Carter, MD, and I am a Professor Emerita at Brown University. I live in Barrington RI.

I am writing to urge the Committee to restore funding for the Rhode Island Department of Health Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic.

What is my connection to Tuberculosis Care in RI? I started working in the TB Clinic in 1988 as a pulmonary fellow at Brown University. Following my fellowship I worked in the TB Clinic and then took over as the medical director in 2000, serving in that function for over 18 years. When I assumed the directorship, state support for the TB Clinic allowed us to see patients one day per week. This was the story of most TB clinics throughout the US- cutbacks as case rates declined. Declining support and loss of expertise led to the resurgence of TB in the 1990s and early 2000s throughout the US. RI saw the same issues. As a state that is ethnically diverse and home to many immigrants from around the world, you have many constituents at risk for this disease- an infection that can lie silent for decades following infection. Under my leadership we rebuilt the TB program in RI and moved the clinic to the Miriam Hospital to work hand in hand with the ID division there, where it is today. More importantly we re-established control of TB and brought the case rate down, below the national average.

Tuberculosis is an airborne pathogen. When a patient becomes infected, they can harbor the mycobacterium for decades silently, only to become ill later and then spread the disease further. The RISE clinic not only cares for patients who are contagious, but also performs contact investigations around infectious cases, screens and provides treatment to those infected but not yet ill.

This pattern of support fluctuation – support for when the disease is in the news and impacting a community – then withdrawal when case rates decline is well known in public health as the U shaped curve of concern. (Reichman ARRD 2012 attached here <https://doi.org/10.1164/ajrccm/144.4.741>)

I urge you not to repeat the same mistake in withdrawing protection for our community. The expertise located at the RISE TB Clinic is unique – and not widely available in the state. The clinic not only provides care for patients but also supplies consultation to practitioners, hospitals, infection control specialists and community health centers throughout the state.

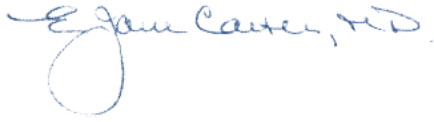
As is often the case in public health, when a program is successful, community members are rarely aware that is working, providing them and their families protection.

I urge you to restore funding for this critical site- the RISE clinic – and protect our state.

I find it ironic that I am writing this plea to you on World TB Day. This is the commemoration of the

discovery by Robert Koch of the organism that causes Tuberculosis. Today we will learn the most recent statistics -globally, millions of patients with TB in the last year. One million patients died. Don't remove the protection of the people of RI from this disease by dismantling the only specialty clinic in the state.

Let's not repeat the errors of the past. Restore Funding to The RISE TB Clinic.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E. Jane Carter, MD." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "E".

E. Jane Carter, MD

Professor Emerita, Brown University School of Medicine

Former Director of The RISE clinic, 2000-2018

Past President, The International Union Against TB and Lung Disease, Paris, France