

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 Debasree Banerjee, and I am the Director of the Medical ICU at Rhode Island Hospital and a pulmonologist in Brown University Health, a faculty member of the Brown medical school. I have diagnosed new active pulmonary TB cases in RI throughout my career here (I trained here for residency and fellowship and stayed for my attending career, thus totaling 16 years now).

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

Why this matters to me and my work:

The RISE clinic ensures continuity for a treatable infectious disease that can pose a public health risk if untreated and which requires months of treatment (and thus close followup and management to help patients complete their course etc). In this clinic, I can be assured that patients will get appropriate contact tracing, screening, observed therapy and education needed for excellent treatment.

Impact if the clinic is eliminated:

Without the clinic, there would be no coordinated care delivery system for TB in the state, the burden would fall to pulmonary or ID clinicians in silos which may mean inadequate treatment and therefore transmission and new denovo cases.

A patient or system example (optional but powerful):

Just this past week, I was involved in the diagnosis of a new pulmonary TB case- this is not uncommon!

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to restore funding for the TB clinic and ensure Rhode Island maintains the capacity to manage tuberculosis effectively and protect

public health.

Sincerely,

Debasree Banerjee, MD

Associate Professor of Medicine, Teaching Scholar
Director, Medical ICU Rhode Island Hospital
Brown University Health
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