

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 Elizabeth Gasperlin and I am an Infectious Disease physician in Providence, Rhode Island.

I write to request that the Committee restore funding for the Rhode Island Department of Health Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic.

I am deeply concerned as both a citizen and a physician about the impacts of this proposed cut on our fellow Rhode Islanders, our health infrastructure, and our public health safety.

Without access to the TB clinic, patients will not receive the care they deserve and require for their own health and recovery from tuberculosis. Our state's TB clinic is an invaluable source of both clinical expertise and skilled care coordination. Not only do they take care of some of our sickest, most vulnerable patients, but they are also managing adherence and monitoring in very socially complex situations.

I have had the privilege to work with and to learn from the physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, case workers, pharmacists, and administrative staff at this clinic. They are some of the most selfless and committed health care workers I have ever met. They work seamlessly and tirelessly to ensure no one falls through the cracks.

Within just this past week, I have personally taken care of a patient admitted to one of our local Providence hospitals with active tuberculosis. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Our Infectious Disease department has noted multiple pulmonary tuberculosis cases in recent weeks and months, raising our collective concern for ongoing community transmission that puts everyone at risk.

As such, I respectfully urge the Committee to restore funding for the state's only TB clinic. The care provided at the TB clinic is keeping the entire state of Rhode Island safe from the spread of the world's most deadly disease.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Gasperlin MD
Infectious Disease Fellow PGY-4
Brown University Health
Providence, RI