



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

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

March 24, 2026

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Kate de Klerk, and I am writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians (RIAFP) to **urge the Committee to restore funding for the Rhode Island Department of Health's RISE Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic.**

The RIAFP represents over 300 Family Medicine physicians, most of whom work in primary care. As primary care physicians, we are often the first point of contact for patients in the healthcare system and the greatest source of continuity in their healthcare journey. We are also often the first to screen for tuberculosis. While many primary care physicians can treat latent tuberculosis, complex cases of latent or active TB fall outside the scope of what we can routinely manage.

Tuberculosis is a complex and highly infectious disease that requires specialized care, rigorous monitoring of treatment adherence, and coordination across healthcare systems. The RISE TB Clinic plays an essential role in ensuring that patients complete therapy, receive adequate follow-up, and that TB is controlled to prevent its spread within our communities.

The clinic provides critical support to hospitals, community health centers, and private practices across the state, ensuring that physicians have access to expert guidance, necessary resources, and coordinated care. Without this support, we would struggle to manage TB effectively in Rhode Island, creating significant risks to public health. Even a single uncontrolled case could result in serious health and financial consequences.

Additionally, if funding for the RISE clinic is eliminated, some of these more complex cases would fall to primary care providers to manage. However, many primary care practices are already operating at capacity and lack the infrastructure or resources to handle complex TB cases. TB treatment requires careful, ongoing monitoring, and without the clinic's oversight,

patients may not receive the necessary care, leading to treatment failures and further transmission. This not only threatens individual health but poses a serious risk to public health.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to restore funding for the RISE TB Clinic to ensure Rhode Island retains the capacity to manage tuberculosis effectively. The clinic is a cornerstone of our state's public health infrastructure, and its continued operation is vital to the health and safety of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Katharina de Klerk, DO
RIAFP President and Advocacy Committee Chair