

Rhode Island House of Representatives  
House Finance Committee

March 24, 2026

**RE: Support for Restoring Funding - The Miriam Hospital Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic**

Members of the Committee:

My name is Maya Hu DeHart, and I am writing to you as a concerned constituent of the east side of Providence, where the TB Clinic is located. Eliminating dedicated state funding for TB care in Rhode Island would be a costly public health nightmare for our state, as well as for our neighbors.

Even with a background in healthcare administration and advocacy, and many close friends working in healthcare, including infectious disease, I am embarrassed to admit that I knew little about the dangers of tuberculosis until recently. **Like many, I thought TB was a disease of history. Quite the opposite, TB is a present-day threat, killing over a million people every year.**

I learned this from reading just the introduction of “Everything is Tuberculosis” (2025), by John Green (author of many best-selling books, including “The Fault in Our Stars” and “Anthropocene Reviewed”). **I also learned that TB has been and remains the world’s deadliest infectious disease, only surpassed by its better known counterpart, Covid-19, from 2020 through 2023.**

**Just like Covid, TB is easily spread through germs - coughs, sneezes, even simple exhalations.** Unlike Covid, there is no TB vaccine; however, TB is treatable and curable. As the single outpatient site of care for TB in the entire state, the TB Clinic provides those treatments and cures, thereby preventing its spread.

The Clinic’s effectiveness has prevented a TB outbreak in our state. **We can risk another Covid-19 like pandemic, or we can easily prevent it by investing in the outpatient infrastructure necessary to control the disease.**

I urge you to continue funding the state’s only TB Clinic in the FY 27 budget and beyond.

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