

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 Sabina Holland, and I am a Pediatric Infectious Disease Attending Physician at Hasbro Children's in Providence, RI. As an infectious disease physician, I care for children who are suspected or found to have TB infection and/or disease. I am extremely familiar with the support provided by the RI Department of Health to the RISE TB Clinic in support of the families of my patients, most of whom would be unable to seek care due to lack of medical insurance.

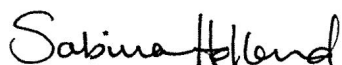
I am writing to urge the Committee to restore funding for the Rhode Island Department of Health Tuberculosis (TB) Clinic. Providing TB care for children at the RISE TB clinic is extremely important because many of the children at highest risk of severe disease, including those under five, those exposed at home, and those living with HIV are also the least likely to access timely diagnostic services in traditional healthcare settings. In 2023, nearly half of children with TB worldwide remained undiagnosed or untreated, often due to barriers such as cost, transportation, or limited access to child-friendly diagnostics. The RISE TB clinic removes these barriers, ensuring that vulnerable families can obtain early evaluation, chest imaging, and reliable and accurate diagnostic testing. The RISE TB Clinic also plays a vital role in the continuation of treatment, partnering with hospital consultants taking care of patients in the hospital to arrange prompt outpatient follow up for our patients as well as arranging the evaluation of those who have been exposed to TB.

The RISE TB Clinic is an essential community anchor; delivering equitable, child-centered TB care that saves lives by reducing delays, improving follow-up, and ensuring every child has access to timely, effective TB prevention and treatment. The TB clinic provides specialized clinical expertise and coordination that supports physicians, hospitals, and community health programs across the state. Tuberculosis care requires careful monitoring, treatment adherence, and public health follow-up to ensure patients complete therapy and to prevent further transmission.

The elimination of funding for the RISE TB Clinic would significantly undermine the state's ability to prevent, diagnose, and control tuberculosis. Losing this resource would force infectious patients into emergency departments and general clinics, overwhelming an already strained healthcare system. The public health consequences would be substantial. Tuberculosis remains the world's leading infectious killer, spreads through the air, and often progresses silently from latent to active disease. Young children and immunocompromised individuals are especially vulnerable. Eliminating the clinic would increase diagnostic delays, disrupt treatment completion, and heighten the risk of reactivation and outbreaks in a state where the majority of active TB cases arise from latent infection. Even a single uncontrolled case can create significant financial and public health burdens, including costly hospitalizations and emergency response efforts—far exceeding the cost of sustaining clinic operations.

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,



Sabina Holland, MD
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