

Dear House Finance Committee Chair Rep. Marvin Abney,

I am a family doctor working and living in Providence. I'm reaching out because I am deeply concerned about the primary care crisis impacting our current workforce, that will soon leave 200,000 Rhode Islanders without access to primary care.

I am writing today to respectfully request your support for **H7686 and S2831** for appropriations of \$2.7M of continued funding of the RIDOH Primary Care Training Sites Program, and **H7486 and S2118**, which will expand eligibility of primary care sites eligible to apply for funding through this program. The expansion of eligibility will enable primary care practices that are OHIC recognized patient-centered medical homes to be compensated for precepting students. Currently the eligibility is limited to NCQA patient-centered medical home recognition. The expansion of eligibility will enable more practices to qualify for the program, further expanding training capacity. This program is a vital investment in Rhode Island's primary care clinician workforce and a cornerstone of our long-term strategy to expand access to primary care. The Primary Care Training Sites Program is especially important to me because I myself trained here in RI at Brown's Family Medicine residency program and chose to stay in Providence and support the local community.

As you know, Rhode Island faces a widening primary care shortage, with patients increasingly unable to find a primary care clinician and practices struggling to recruit and retain physicians. The Primary Care Training Sites Program was created to take a proactive, strategic step toward addressing this challenge by supporting community-based primary care preceptors who train medical students and residents, nurse practitioner and physician assistant students in advanced primary care settings. These clinical training experiences are essential for shaping interest in primary care careers, particularly in Rhode Island's communities.

The program was implemented in July 2025 and is currently in-progress with **34 primary care training sites and over 130 preceptors enrolled, successfully expanding access to primary care clinical training for medical, nurse practitioner and physician assistant students by 68%**. Continued funding for this program is not included in the Governor's budget. Without sustained support, Rhode Island risks losing momentum at a time when

the state cannot afford to step back. Disruption to the program would limit training capacity, diminish our ability to prepare future primary care clinicians, and undermine progress toward building a stable primary care workforce. In this first year, 9 practices were waitlisted. Full funding is needed to expand the program beyond this year's capacity. The program supports preceptors with a unique, specially designed curriculum that exposes trainees to the patient-centered medical home model of care delivery that is specific to advanced primary care practices.

It is important to note that Rural Health funding cannot be used to fund this program since the program has been funded through state appropriation. With the potential development of a state medical school at URI, in-state capacity to train future primary care clinicians is more important than ever.

**To sustain and expand the program in FY27, full funding in the amount \$2.7M will be required.**

This investment is modest, but the return is significant. With funding, Rhode Island can:

- Expand clinical training opportunities across the state (establishment of a medical school will greatly increase the need for clinical training sites)
- Deepen the pipeline of future primary care clinicians, including physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants
- Provide preceptors needed resources, mentorship, and professional development
- Strengthen access for patients statewide

We are grateful for the progress this administration has made to address the primary care crisis, including support for Medicaid rate increases, loan repayment and the Wavemaker program, as well as workforce planning efforts. Continuing the Primary Care Training Sites Program is a natural extension of this work—and one of the most strategic, cost-effective steps Rhode Island can take to ensure that our future patients have access to high-quality primary care.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your ongoing leadership on behalf of Rhode Island's patients, clinicians, and communities.

Sincerely,

Jenna Georgiou MD

Attending Physician, Hillside Family Medicine

Assistant Clinical Professor, Brown University

Email: [jennageorgiou8@gmail.com](mailto:jennageorgiou8@gmail.com)

Pronouns: she, her, hers

