



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

Re: H7686

March 30, 2026

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I write to you on behalf of the Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians (RIAFP) in strong support of House Bill H7686, which would restore and sustain funding for the Primary Care Training Sites Program.

In 2024, the General Assembly took an important and forward-looking step by establishing the Primary Care Training Sites Program. This program supports primary care practices in becoming clinical training sites for medical, nurse practitioner, and physician assistant students. In its first year the program issued 34 grants to primary care practices across the state, expanding our state's capacity for high quality primary care education. This program has been a great success and we urge the General Assembly to continue to fund it, or risk undermining the primary care training pipeline at a time when primary care is in crisis.

We know that exposure matters. Positive experiences with a preceptor can profoundly influence a trainee's choice of specialty. When students are welcomed into well-supported, high-functioning primary care settings, they are far more likely to choose careers in primary care. Conversely, when practices lack the resources to teach, we lose critical opportunities to inspire the next generation. Expanding the pool of primary care preceptors in the state is therefore critical for helping trainees find their passion for primary care.

As Family Medicine physicians, we have seen the growing divide between the demand and supply for primary care in Rhode Island. Based on data from 2022-2023 it is estimated that RI would need more than 250 full time primary care providers to meet the primary care needs of the state. Burnout and an aging primary care workforce have exacerbated this problem to a crisis point. It is time to take seriously the need for an expanded primary care workforce to meet the needs of our population.

By now virtually every Rhode Islander has experienced the lack of primary care services or knows someone who has, and it is time for concrete steps to address this issue both in the short-term and the long-term. The Primary Care Training Sites Program is a great example of an investment that is likely to have a meaningful impact within just a few years.

Looking ahead, conversations about expanding undergraduate medical education in Rhode Island—including the potential establishment of a new medical school—make this issue even more pressing. Increasing the number of students without simultaneously expanding training capacity in primary care would exacerbate existing bottlenecks. We must ensure that our training infrastructure grows in parallel with any expansion in medical education.

Finally, investing in primary care is not only clinically sound—it is fiscally responsible. Evidence shows that every \$1 invested in primary care yields approximately \$13 in downstream savings. Strong primary care reduces avoidable emergency department visits, decreases hospitalizations, and improves management of chronic disease. In short, it keeps Rhode Islanders healthier while lowering overall healthcare costs. The Primary Care Training Sites Program is a creative and successful program that will help us rebuild our primary care workforce. Allowing this program to lapse after a successful first year would be a significant step backward.

On behalf of the RIAFP and the patients we serve, I respectfully urge you to support House Bill 7686 and ensure continued funding for the Primary Care Training Sites Program.

Sincerely,

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Rhode Island Academy of Family Physicians