



235 Promenade Street, Suite 455
Providence, RI 02908
401.274.1771
info@rihca.org
www.rihca.org

April 30, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Rhode Island House of Representatives
House Finance Committee
(Submitted electronically via HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter of support for House Bill 7686, which supports the primary care training sites program, and House Bill 7503, which would establish the medical primary care scholarship program.

Rhode Island's eight community health centers are primary care safety net providers for over 220,000 individuals combined: 85% of their patients have incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, 51% are enrolled in Medicaid, and 10% are uninsured. Demand for services at health centers continues to rise, with a 10,000-patient increase in just one year.

A strong primary care workforce is crucial to ensuring health centers can provide care to underserved communities in the state. State workforce shortages have made recruiting and retaining staff challenging for health centers. Rhode Island must continue to work to address its primary care clinician shortages by investing in primary care.

House Bill 7686 would ensure continued funding support for the Primary Care Training Sites Program. The program supports training for physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, ensuring that primary care providers have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to deliver comprehensive, evidence-based care to their patients. The program anticipates 68% growth in clinical training across participating sites in its first year. Funding will allow the program to continue its important work.

House Bill 7503 would help address medical education debt, a significant barrier for many individuals pursuing careers in primary care. To maximize the program's impact, we encourage the Committee to prioritize applicants who commit to practicing in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and other underserved communities, where providers often cannot compete with larger systems on salary and benefits. We also recommend incorporating selection criteria that direct public funds toward practices serving the broadest range of Rhode Islanders; other states, including Virginia, have used similar approaches to strengthen the primary care workforce in high-need areas.

We thank the sponsors for their dedication to addressing the primary care crisis and the Committee for their consideration.

Thank you,

M Campbell

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager

The Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program East Bay
Community Action Program ~ Providence Community Health Centers
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action Agency
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health