

May 5, 2026

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of H8417, which would provide temporary funding to help keep Hillsgrove House open during its current Medicaid funding crisis.

Hillsgrove House is the only Clubhouse in Rhode Island and provides essential services, community, and support for people living with mental health conditions. Clubhouses are a proven model that help people build relationships, return to work and school, reduce isolation, and remain connected to their communities.

I am especially concerned that a technical Medicaid issue could put Rhode Island's only Clubhouse at risk of closure. The people who rely on Hillsgrove House should not lose access to this critical resource while the funding issue is being resolved.

Hillsgrove House is led by Mark Maragnano, a respected longtime Clubhouse leader who previously served as Director of Potter Place in Waltham, Massachusetts. His leadership and the Hillsgrove House community deserve support during this urgent time.

As someone who has operated and supported Clubhouses in Massachusetts for over 30 years, I am very aware of the critical role they play in a state, and in local communities, to provide support, opportunities, and hope to individuals with serious mental health challenges. And as someone who has been very active in the larger Clubhouse community in the United States, I am well aware of the great work being done by Mark and his team at Hillsgrove House.

Although I am not a resident of Rhode Island I write in support of my fellow New Englanders, the Rhode Island citizens who depend on Hillsgrove House as part of the safety net that helps them stay out of hospitals and thrive in their community as they move forward on their mental health recovery journeys.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support H8417 and provide the temporary funding needed to keep Hillsgrove House open.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Don Hughes
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