



May 11, 2026

The Honorable Representative Martin Abney
House Finance Committee, Chair
Rhode Island House of Representatives
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for S2892/H8171 – Relating to Health and Safety – Food As Medicine Pilot Program

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee:

Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island (MOWRI) formally voices its strong support for the passage of Senate Bill 2892/House Bill 8171 – Relating to Health and Safety – Food As Medicine (FAM) Pilot Program legislation that would establish a FAM Task Force and authorize the development of a FAM pilot program administered by the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

Our mission is to meet the nutritional, safety, and social needs of those we serve so they can maintain healthy and independent lifestyles. Since 1969, our proven effective “More Than a Meal” service model has worked to help our clients achieve equitable access to fully healthy lives through increased access to adequate nutrition appropriate for their dietary needs, safety assurances, and community connection. Our traditional nutritional programming continues to enable homebound and other food-insecure older adults to live independently with improved health outcomes.

At the conclusion of our 2022-2025 strategic plan, MOWRI successfully pivoted from a grassroots community-based organization to a trusted statewide healthcare partner with a reinforced focus on our Food Is Medicine (FIM). Through strategic innovation, we have extended our service model and expanded our programming to further meet the needs of underserved populations, who are at greater risk, due to the combination of nutrition insecurity and the burdens of chronic illness. Through pilot programming, strengthened partnerships and vigorous pursuit of new revenue streams, we are reaching additional populations who can benefit from FIM interventions to help them manage chronic disease and realize better health and well-being.

Operating under our 2030 Strategic Plan, “Building Resilience, Deepening Impact,” we are celebrating our key accomplishments in the FIM space and working to advance comprehensive participant-centered services that promote health equity and drive improved health outcomes.

Our FIM interventions include medically tailored meals, therapeutic grocery deliveries, and nutritional education and counseling. In 2025, we delivered 22,787 medically tailored meals and provided grocery delivery to 252 households. So far in 2026, we’ve delivered 5,074 medically tailored meals, provided grocery delivery to 88 households, and launched a nutrition counseling program.

The proposed task force brings together state agencies, healthcare providers, insurers, academic experts, and others key organizations and individuals working in the space to examine best practices, identify priority populations, and develop recommendations for a carefully scoped pilot program. This collaborative structure will ensure that any future FAM initiative in Rhode Island is data driven, fiscally responsible, and aligned with Medicaid’s commitment to curbing health care costs, improving population health, and advancing health equity.

FAM interventions represent a promising strategy to improve health outcomes, advance equity, and strengthen Rhode Island’s healthcare system. House Bill 8171 takes an important first step toward realizing that potential.

MOWRI respectfully urges the House Finance Committee to support House Bill 8171 and move this legislation forward. Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meghan Grady', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Meghan Grady
Executive Director

CC: Chris O’Brien, Committee Clerk