



The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

May 20, 2026

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of Brown University Health, we appreciate the opportunity to share the importance of sustaining several critical healthcare services that support Rhode Island residents and communities. We thank the Committee for its time and thoughtful consideration of these matters, and we also extend our sincere appreciation to Governor McKee and his Administration for recognizing the importance of investing in essential healthcare infrastructure across the State, through [GBA #16](#), which Brown University Health is in full support.

[Brown University Health](#) is Rhode Island's largest health system and its largest employer, serving patients across a comprehensive and integrated network of care. With over 1,620 patient care offices and locations, including our six hospitals in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, we are committed to delivering high-quality, patient-centered care in every community we serve. As a leading academic and clinical health system, we attract world-class physicians, researchers, and healthcare professionals, fostering innovation, advancing medical education, and ensuring access to cutting-edge treatments. Our health system plays a critical role in strengthening the region's healthcare infrastructure, driving economic growth, and improving the overall health and well-being of the populations we serve.

First, we are deeply appreciative of the Governor's recommendation to support the Newport Hospital Birthing Center, which provides essential obstetrical, labor and delivery, postpartum, nursery, and related maternal health services to residents of Aquidneck Island and the surrounding communities. Like many community hospital-based birthing programs across Rhode Island and the country, the Newport Hospital Birthing Center faces significant financial challenges driven by reimbursement structures that do not cover the actual cost of maintaining 24/7 obstetrical services. Medicaid and TRICARE account for more than half of all births at Newport Hospital, yet reimbursement rates remain well below the true cost of care delivery. Combined with workforce shortages and rising labor and operational expenses, these financial pressures threaten the long-term sustainability of community-based maternity services. Brown University Health has determined that approximately \$4.9 million in annual operating support, beyond existing reimbursement and operating revenues, is necessary to sustainably maintain Birthing Center operations and preserve local access to maternal healthcare services.

We are also grateful for the Governor's recommendation to restore funding support for The Miriam Hospital Tuberculosis Clinic through the Department of Health budget. The Clinic serves a critical public health role for Rhode Island by providing prevention, treatment, monitoring, and coordinated care for individuals impacted by tuberculosis. Continued investment in the Clinic is essential not only to protect vulnerable patients, but also to



Newport Hospital

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safeguard broader public health throughout the State. Tuberculosis prevention and treatment programs require sustained infrastructure, specialized clinical expertise, and coordinated community outreach efforts that cannot be maintained without adequate public support. Preserving these services helps Rhode Island maintain a strong public health response capacity and ensures continuity of care for patients who rely on these specialized services.

In addition, we appreciate the Governor's recommendation to provide \$2.0 million in general revenue support for the Ryan White HIV Care Program to help maintain program solvency amid escalating drug costs, reductions in rebate revenue, and federal funding pressures. The Ryan White Program provides critical access to medications, care coordination, and support services for Rhode Islanders living with HIV. These investments are essential to ensuring continued treatment access, maintaining positive health outcomes, reducing barriers to care, and preventing disruptions in services for vulnerable patient populations. Sustained state investment in the Ryan White Program is vital to preserving Rhode Island's longstanding commitment to comprehensive HIV care and public health prevention efforts.

Collectively, these investments in maternal health services, tuberculosis prevention and treatment, and HIV care represent critical commitments to Rhode Island's healthcare system and public health infrastructure. Each program serves populations with unique and essential healthcare needs, and each faces growing financial pressures due in large part to reimbursement and funding structures that do not fully account for the true cost of delivering high-quality, specialized care. Continued partnership between the State and healthcare providers will be essential to maintaining access to these and other services for Rhode Island residents.

We appreciate the Committee's leadership and consideration of these important healthcare priorities. Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting access to essential healthcare services across Rhode Island.

Thank you,

David A. Balasco, Esq.

Vice President, Government Relations

Brown University Health