

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney, Chair
House Finance Committee

The Honorable Scott A. Slater, Vice Chair
House Finance Committee

Dear Chair Abney and Vice Chair Slater:

I am writing to ask for your support of legislation that is critical to the success of Rhode Island's Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) and the expansion of patient access to healthcare services.

Budget Amendment 6 of the RHTP appropriately recognizes the important role pharmacists can play by expanding their scope of practice for certain conditions. However, the amendment does not currently include a mechanism to ensure reimbursement for these services. Without reimbursement, pharmacists will have limited ability, incentive, or capacity to implement these expanded responsibilities, particularly in rural and underserved communities where access to care is already constrained.

The Rhode Island Pharmacists Association (RIPA) has worked with the Rhode Island Department of Health to propose language that would establish reimbursement pathways for pharmacist-provided services. In addition, the following legislation has been introduced to support this effort:

- **S2386 (Senator DiPalma)**
- **H7536 (Representative Casimiro)**

These bills are essential to achieving the intended goals of the Rural Health Transformation Program by ensuring that pharmacists can sustainably provide expanded patient care services. Supporting pharmacist reimbursement will improve access to care, strengthen the healthcare workforce, and help address healthcare gaps across Rhode Island.

Importantly, **Connecticut took a major step forward on this issue this week.** On May 29, Governor Ned Lamont signed landmark legislation requiring state health plans and insurance carriers to ensure their reimbursement processes and provider networks are inclusive of licensed pharmacists for covered clinical services. This legislation recognizes pharmacists as healthcare providers and creates a foundation for reimbursement of pharmacist-delivered patient care services, including immunizations, test-and-treat programs, contraceptive prescribing, chronic disease management, and other clinical interventions. Connecticut's action demonstrates growing recognition across the region that pharmacist reimbursement is essential to expanding access to care and maximizing the healthcare workforce.

Rhode Island now has an opportunity to follow this successful model and ensure that the goals of the Rural Health Transformation Program can be fully realized.

I respectfully ask for your support of S2386 and H7536 and appreciate your consideration of these important measures.

Thank you for your commitment to improving healthcare access and outcomes for Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Kerry LaPlante, PharmD
Dean, College of Pharmacy
University of Rhode Island