

Steven Sepe

From: Christine Nevins-Herbert <CHerbert@HopeHealthCo.org>
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2025 9:15 AM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee
Subject: House Bill 5355 - Certificate of Need

Dear House Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Christine Nevins-Herbert, MD and I have been a resident of Providence for over 10 years. I am also an assistant medical director at HopeHealth Hospice & Palliative Care, which provides care to thousands of seriously ill and terminally ill residents throughout Rhode Island.

I am writing to express my serious concerns with the proposed changes to the Certificate of Need (CON) program in Article 10, Section 1 of the Governor's FY 2026 budget - specifically those provisions which seek to remove hospice providers from the definition of "healthcare facilities" covered by the CON process.

While I appreciate the intent to streamline the process by alleviating the need for a CON, I am concerned about the unintended consequences of this change and the impact on the high-quality hospice services provided in our state.

Rhode Islanders receive among the highest quality hospice care in the country. I believe that this is, in part, due to the CON process that has served the state well. The data regarding access to quality hospice care in states with and without a CON process clearly displays the value of having such a system in place.

I worry that eliminating the CON requirement for hospice care will lead to an over-saturation of hospice agencies with limited numbers of patients leading to the enrollment of patients who are not qualified for hospice. Many of these providers will be for-profit, private equity funded providers which regularly seek to provide services in non-CON states. We have all seen first-hand the devastating impacts of for-profit healthcare in the Steward and Prospect Medical situations locally.

For nearly fifty years, HopeHealth has provided exceptional hospice, palliative, and grief support services. Our dedicated staff of over 500 employees brings this dedication and compassion in providing exemplary highly skilled care to our patients and support for their families.

I am proud of the high-quality hospice system in our state that offers a level of care that Rhode Islanders deserve and have come to expect from their hospice providers. For these reasons, I urge you to oppose any effort to eliminate or weaken the current CON process for hospice care providers.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Christine Nevins-Herbert, MD

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Hospice Medical Doctor

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