



# RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY

Chairperson Susan Donovan  
House Health & Human Services Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 25HB-5428

SUPPORT

March 27, 2025

Dear Chair Donovan,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Medical Society (RIMS), I write in strong support of House Bill 6036, the *Rhode Island Clinician Wellness and Support Act*, and to express our appreciation to Representative Edwards for his leadership in introducing this important legislation.

For nearly five decades, RIMS has operated the Rhode Island Physician Health Program (RI-PHP)—a confidential, non-disciplinary resource for physicians, physician assistants, dentists, and podiatrists in our state. First established in 1978, RI-PHP has supported over 800 clinicians and remains a critical safeguard for both provider well-being and patient safety. In 2024, referrals for behavioral health concerns outpaced substance use referrals by a ratio of 3 to 1, mirroring national trends and underscoring the urgent need to expand and sustain programs that offer early, compassionate intervention. The RI-PHP closed 36 cases last year and ended with 42 active participants, offering monitoring agreements, recovery support, and direct engagement with licensing boards, hospitals, and medical education institutions.

Despite its proven impact, the RI-PHP is not formally recognized in statute. House Bill 6036 would change that, providing a sound legal foundation for this vital program and allowing it to operate with greater visibility, legitimacy, and support. Just as importantly, this bill would establish a Nurse Practitioner Health Program, ensuring Rhode Island's nurse practitioners—who currently lack an equivalent support structure—have access to confidential, non-punitive care. H 6036 also aligns Rhode Island licensing practices with national recommendations by focusing on current impairment rather than past diagnoses or treatment history. These changes reduce stigma, encourage clinicians to seek help, and promote a culture of support rather than fear.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass H 6036 and help ensure that all Rhode Island clinicians—regardless of specialty or credential—have access to the resources they need to stay healthy and care safely for others.

Sincerely,

Kara Stavros, MD  
President