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April 23, 2025

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 5614 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions – Nurses

Dear Chair Donovan:

Please accept this letter of support for H 5614, legislation that would amend several statutes to either provide clarity or align with new federal requirements. No policy changes are being proposed. This legislation has been introduced at the request of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH). The following represents a summary of the proposed changes:

- **Speech language pathologists and audiologists:** The General Assembly enacted legislation in 2023 that needs to be aligned with another statute (See: [Original \(5-48\)](#) and [New \(5-48.2\)](#)). This proposal would repeal one of the statutes and combine the new language into one statute. It is important to have clear and non-competing legislative language for RIDOH and the public to understand statutory requirements and expectations.
- **Massage Therapists:** The statute, as written, creates several unintended problems for students and schools making it impossible to qualify for licensure going forward. One change would fix a mistake in the recently enacted legislation because the chapter number was not updated. The second change would be to address an error in drafting and allow more time for schools to update their massage therapy programs to meet new hour requirement. RIDOH does not want to create extreme barriers for licensure or be charged with complying with a law that prevents awarding of licenses to students that invested money for preparation that would not confer a license. This amends Section 5-95-8 of the RIGLs.
- **Drinking Water Reports:** RIDOH proposes to remove subsection (b) of R.I. Gen. Laws § 46-13-18, which is a provision of the Rhode Island Public Drinking Water Supply statute pertaining to consumer confidence reports (CCRs). CCRs are annual drinking water quality reports that certain public water systems are required to deliver to their customers. On May 24, 2024, EPA issued a final rule revising the federal *CCR National Primary Drinking Water Regulation* (NPDWR) [89 FR 45980](#) (Revised CCR NPDWR), which requires states with primary enforcement responsibility to implement the revisions within two years. Under the Revised CCR NPDWR, among other new requirements and changes, systems serving more than 10,000 people are required to send out CCRs biannually, and the delivery methods applicable to all systems (including the recommended good-faith efforts of reaching consumers who don't get water bills) have been updated/broadened. As a result, subsection (b) of RIGL § 46-13-18 is no longer needed.
- **NCLEX:** The General Assembly made changes in the last session to allow nursing graduates who had not signed up for the NCLEX to practice nursing for 90 days from the receipt of payment by

RIDOH. The NCLEX is the national nursing licensure examination. This proposal would clarify the language for the employers, applicants, and public safety. There are a few reasons for the changes:

- Tying the 90 days to payment is tough given the way people apply for a nursing license at RIDOH.
- A nursing graduate could potentially start to work and never apply to RIDOH to take the exam, thus allowing them to work indefinitely without a license.
- People start applying to take the exam before they graduate, so it does not align with the current language of being a graduate. This amends Section 5-34-31 of the General Laws.

RIDOH is happy to answer any questions the members of the Committee may have regarding the proposed amendments.

Sincerely,



Jerome M. Larkin, MD
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy