



Testimony of Matthew Netto, AARP Rhode Island  
**In support of House Bill 5622**  
House Committee on Health and Human Services  
April 23, 2025

Chairwoman Donovan and members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization with 38 million members nationwide and nearly 125,000 members here in Rhode Island. We advocate on behalf of issues that impact older adults, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for requiring the state to implement the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, restoring access to telemedicine for all Rhode Island residents and allowing treatment by out-of-state providers who register with Department of Health.

Interstate licensure compacts create reciprocal professional licensing practices between states, while ensuring the quality and safety of services and safeguarding state sovereignty. Since January 2016, 170 separate pieces of licensure compact legislation have been passed by states. To date, 42 states and territories have enacted occupational licensure compacts for nurses, physicians, physical therapists, emergency medical technicians, psychologists, speech therapists/audiologists, occupational therapists, and counselors.<sup>1</sup>

With these licensure compacts in place, Rhode Island residents will benefit from a more efficient distribution of services, increased availability of qualified practitioners and elevated safety standards.

House Bill 5622 would also restore access to telemedicine for all Rhode Island residents and allowing treatment by out-of-state providers who register with Department of Health. A 2022 AARP study showed that about one-third (32%) of U.S. adults aged 50-plus report being extremely or very interested in using telehealth services for themselves or for a loved one, a figure that is essentially unchanged since April 2020 (30%). Half (51%) of adults aged 50-plus say they or a family member have used telehealth in the past two years.<sup>2</sup>

Telehealth can be particularly helpful for older adults, who can benefit from the added convenience, reduced barriers to care, and increased independence. These benefits can be even more pronounced for members of underserved or rural communities, or older adults with disabilities or physical limitations – all of whom may experience additional barriers when seeking in-person care. AARP supports the permanent expansion of telehealth – including the

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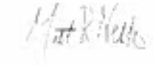
<sup>1</sup> <https://compacts.csg.org/compacts/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/health/prevention-wellness/telehealth-use-update/>

removal of geographic restrictions, as well as the removal of prohibitions on audio-only services.

Rhode Island needs to find solutions to our healthcare access and staffing shortage issues. House Bill 5622 would work towards accomplishing both. Please take this important step to improve healthcare access for all Rhode Islanders. We urge you to recommend passage on House Bill 5622. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Matthew Netto", is positioned above the printed name.

**Matthew Netto**  
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