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The Honorable Susan Donovan
Chair, House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7536 and H7424 – An Act Relating to Insurance – Accident and Sickness Insurance Policies

Submitted electronically via: HouseHealthandHumanServices@riflegislature.gov

Dear Chair Donovan and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my urgent support for **House Bill 7424** and **House Bill 7536**, which together help address a growing crisis in Rhode Island's healthcare delivery system. Our state is currently facing an unprecedented shortage of primary care physicians. These bills offer a practical, immediate solution by leveraging the clinical expertise of Rhode Island's pharmacists.

H 7424: Collaborative Practice as a Solution to Provider Shortages Rhode Island patients are currently waiting months for appointments with specialists. For a patient with a complex chronic condition like diabetes, a six-month wait to see an endocrinologist can lead to preventable complications and ER visits. H 7424 modernizes collaborative practice agreements, removing barriers for pharmacists to support our already overburdened physicians. By removing barriers for pharmacists to manage drug therapy and provide expert chronic care management, we can ensure that patients receive continuous, expert care between doctor visits. This bill helps move us from a fragmented system to a team-based model that works for a state with a provider deficit.

H 7536: Ensuring Sustainability of Pharmacist-Led Services H 7424 is only half of the solution; we must also ensure that these clinical services are financially sustainable. H 7536 mandates that pharmacists and the health systems that employ them be fairly reimbursed for the professional services they render. Currently, pharmacists working under a collaborative practice agreement are often expected to perform high-level clinical work — such as complex chronic disease management — without a suitable mechanism for reimbursement. Without H 7536, pharmacists will continue to be underutilized by our healthcare system due to the financial limitations associated with taking on clinical staff that cannot seek reimbursement.

Rhode Island cannot wait for a decade-long pipeline of new doctors to solve our current access crisis. We have highly trained clinical pharmacists ready to work today. By passing H 7424 and H 7536, the General Assembly will provide our patients with faster access to cost-efficient, convenient, and collaborative care while supporting our overburdened physicians. I urge the Committee to recognize the clinical necessity of these bills and move them forward with a favorable recommendation to protect the health of all Rhode Islanders.

Regards,

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