

3/12/2026

To the Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Legislative Committee:

On behalf of the Westerly Hospital Emergency Department Leadership Team, we are writing to express our strong and unequivocal **support** for **Bill H7485**, which authorizes Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) programs to bill for services provided within the community, including treatment in place. This legislation is essential to sustaining and expanding a service model that has already demonstrated profound, measurable benefits for patients across Washington County.

Our region has been a leader in developing and implementing Mobile Integrated Health programs. With early start-up funds from the State of Rhode Island and now without any ongoing funding Washington County's MIH teams have created a model of care that improves patient outcomes, reduces preventable 911 utilization, and provides timely interventions that prevent unnecessary emergency department visits and hospitalizations. As hospital leaders, we have seen firsthand the impact these programs have on the safety, stability, and recovery of our patients.

One particularly meaningful example involved a recently discharged trauma patient. Upon returning home, this individual was at high risk for complications and further injury. The MIH team conducted a full assessment of the living environment, identified fall hazards, installed grab bars, replaced fixtures, and collaborated directly with the patient's medical team to address pain and expedite follow-up care. These interventions kept him safely at home, avoided unnecessary readmission, and significantly improved his recovery experience.

MIH programs have also been instrumental in reducing fall-related 911 activations by identifying and supporting individuals who were frequently using emergency services for falls. MIH teams spent time inside patients' homes, building trust, observing daily routines, and understanding the root causes of recurrent injuries. This level of engagement simply cannot be replicated within the four walls of a

hospital or emergency department. The relationships these EMS clinicians have built with community members are extraordinary and deeply impactful.

Westerly Hospital has also partnered closely with MIH programs to support patients who experience frequent hospital admissions. Through home visits, MIH providers assess fall risks, evaluate a patient's ability to navigate their living environment, clarify medication regimens, review discharge instructions, and address unmet social determinants of health such as food insecurity or lack of heating support. Perhaps most importantly, they offer a compassionate, consistent point of contact for patients who often feel overwhelmed or disconnected from the healthcare system.

A patient who stands out in our facility's experience had advanced COPD and repeatedly rebounded back to the hospital despite comprehensive planning. MIH clinicians identified two critical barriers during a home visit: she needed to climb three flights of narrow stairs, and her home environment was dangerously hot because she could not afford air conditioning. MIH partnered with community resources to obtain and install a window AC unit and developed a plan to safely assist her down the stairs before appointments. The team also provided supplemental oxygen or breathing treatments as needed. These interventions dramatically improved her ability to attend follow-up appointments something she had not consistently done for years and her health outcomes improved accordingly.

These stories reflect broader, consistent outcomes:

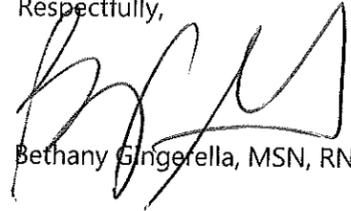
- MIH prevents avoidable ED visits and hospital admissions.
- MIH reduces 911 utilization for non-emergent conditions.
- MIH strengthens patient engagement and follow-through with care plans.
- MIH addresses social and environmental risks that hospitals cannot see from within the facility.
- MIH improves safety and independence for medically complex patients.
- MIH supports EMS providers in practicing at the full extent of their licensure.

Despite these clear benefits, MIH programs cannot remain sustainable without the ability to bill for services including treatment in place under the structure outlined in **Bill H7485**. Our EMS partners have demonstrated that this model works. Now they need the legislative framework that allows them to maintain and expand it.

As healthcare leaders deeply committed to safe, equitable, and patient-centered care, we strongly urge your support of this bill. It is a forward-thinking, fiscally responsible step that aligns with the needs of our patients, the capabilities of our EMS system, and the long-term vision of community-based healthcare in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and for your continued dedication to the wellbeing of our communities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bethany G. Gingerella', written over a horizontal line.

Bethany Gingerella, MSN, RN, CEN, TCRN, CPEN, NREMT-Paramedic