



March 19, 2026

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Rhode Island State House
househealthandhumanservices@rilegislature.gov

Re: **Testimony SUPPORTING HB 7927**, to require long-term care facilities to allow residents to use **existing shared wifi networks** for the use of electronic monitoring devices

Dear Chair Donovan and Honorable Committee Members,

ABC-RI stands for the rights and interests of all Rhode Islanders residing in long-term care facilities. We strongly support HB 7927 because it allows an important right to be exercised equitably.

The right of a resident to use an electronic monitoring device in a long-term care facility—a right that you, committee members, ensured residents have and protected in statute two years ago, and for which we remain most grateful— should not depend on whether a resident or family can afford a separate internet contract.

As written, Rhode Island's current law creates a two-tiered system in which wealthier families can monitor their loved ones' care and others cannot. HB 7927 closes that gap by requiring facilities that already provide wifi to extend that access to residents' monitoring devices — at no cost to the facility and no barrier to the resident. This doesn't require any network upgrades for facilities, just to share what they are already sharing for other devices.

Before I was called to advocacy, I was a computer science teacher in the New York City public schools, which included managing the school's network and all of the devices on it. From that experience, I can tell you that it is very simple to cap bandwidth usage so that individual devices do not create network congestion. Network management tools have grown more sophisticated and accessible since I left teaching, and experts with whom we consulted when the original bill was up in 2024 counseled us that having numerous personal hotspots would actually cause more problems than allowing residents to use shared wifi.

We urge you to support HB 7927, to close the equity gap and allow those with limited resources to exercise the same right as their more wealthy neighbors.

Thank you for your time and attention, and for all of your work on behalf of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Gerard, ABC-RI