



Michael Sroczyński
President

March 19, 2026

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

Re: H.7931

Dear Chairperson Donovan,

On behalf of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) and our member hospitals, I am writing to express concerns with H.7931, an act related to the provision of interpreter services. While we share the goal of ensuring language access, the bill as written creates an approach that does not fully account for current technological limitations or the operational realities of clinical practice.

As drafted, the bill establishes a more rigid set of requirements for interpreter services that may limit hospitals' ability to respond to patient needs in real time. Hospitals currently use a combination of in-person interpreters, bilingual staff, and remote interpretation services to ensure timely communication across a wide range of languages. Requiring a "certified" interpreter in all instances, without flexibility, may create delays in care—particularly for less common languages or during off-hours.

The bill also requires translation of "vital documents" based on specified population thresholds. While well-intended, this presents significant implementation challenges. Many Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems are not designed to support dynamic translation of customized patient materials, and developing and maintaining translated documents across multiple languages would require immense initial and on-going resources.

Finally, the bill relies on language thresholds that may be difficult to operationalize given current data limitations. Hospitals continue to improve the collection of patient language preference data, but this work is ongoing.

HARI remains committed to advancing language access and appreciates Representative Morales' leadership on this issue. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor and this Committee on a more flexible, workable approach that supports both patients and providers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa P. Tomasso", is written over a horizontal line.

Lisa P. Tomasso
Senior Vice President

Hospital Association of Rhode Island

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