

Rhode Island Nursing Education Center, 350 Eddy St., Providence, RI 02881-2021 p: 401-874-9711 f: 401-874-9050 www.uri.edu/nursing

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Representative Susan R. Donovan, Chair
HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov
March 23, 2026
RE: Testimony in support of House bill 7486

Dear Chair Donovan:

As background for our support of H 7486, nurse practitioners in Rhode Island worked for and sustain full practice authority in statute, allowing us to provide comprehensive and continuous patient centered care in many health care facilities across the state. Our care is safe, compassionate and evidence based. The majority of nurse practitioners in Rhode Island graduate from accredited schools and work in primary care, increasing access to patient care and contributing to the transformation of the primary care work force.

The primary care training sites program, presently in Governor McKee's budget in 2025 has established an office of primary care in the department of health, that has distributed funding to health care agencies with health care providers willing to precept nurse practitioner, physician assistant and medical students. This program established and maintains an online tutorial database for clinical preceptors and students, along with regular meetings convened by the Office of Primary Care, established by the original statute. This has increased the well qualified preceptor workforce by 68%, but there is still work to do. We at the university struggle every semester to place our students in well established primary care sites in Federally qualified health centers, hospital and school based clinics and other out patient settings. The number of students we admit is significantly limited by the number of clinical sites we have access to. At the required number of hours to graduate and obtain licenses in Rhode Island, the nurse practitioner students must participate in 2 clinic settings per week per 14 week semesters times 3. For that reason, each student could have as many as 6 clinical placements before graduation.

Without compensation, the university, college of nursing faces steep competition from other schools in the Boston area and from private agencies that place students for a fee, paid by the student.

I urge passage of this bill to increase patient access to primary care in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,



Denise Coppa, PhD, APRN-CNP, FNP-C, FAAN
Interim Associate Dean-graduate studies
House District: 31