



RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY

Chairperson Susan Donovan
House Health & Human Services Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Support with Revisions – H 7721

April 9, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Medical Society (RIMS), representing physicians and physicians-in-training across all specialties and practice settings, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on H7721. We also thank Representative Fogarty for advancing this important discussion.

RIMS supports the core goal of this legislation: ensuring medical decision-making remains in the hands of licensed physicians and protecting the integrity of the patient-physician relationship from inappropriate corporate influence.

Healthcare delivery has evolved, with increasing consolidation, investment, and complex management structures shaping physician practice. While these arrangements can provide operational and financial support, physicians broadly agree that clinical decisions — including diagnosis, treatment, referrals, and standards of care — must remain independent and guided solely by patient need.

At the same time, physicians hold diverse views regarding ownership structures and practice arrangements, many of which have developed in response to changing economic realities and the need for capital investment, administrative infrastructure, and practice sustainability. Rhode Island's healthcare environment, characterized by workforce shortages, financial pressures on practices and hospitals, and ongoing access challenges, makes careful implementation especially important.

Many physician practices currently operating in Rhode Island entered into ownership or management arrangements in good faith and in compliance with existing law to remain viable and continue serving their communities. Any new statutory framework should avoid destabilizing these practices or requiring the unwinding of arrangements that are functioning appropriately and preserving access to care. Likewise, the legislation should not disadvantage independent practices that may consider similar lawful arrangements to sustain their independence in a challenging economic environment. Safeguards are appropriate, but they must preserve practice sustainability and patient access and reflect the realities of Rhode Island's current healthcare market.

For these reasons, RIMS believes the legislation will require thoughtful revision and continued collaboration to ensure its provisions achieve the intended protections without unintended disruption to care delivery or patient access.

As discussion continues, RIMS looks forward to working with the Committee and bill sponsors to ensure the final framework:

- Preserves physician clinical autonomy and independent professional judgment;
- Clearly prohibits inappropriate corporate interference in medical decision-making;
- Promotes transparency and accountability in healthcare ownership structures;
- Provides clarity, reasonable transition protections, and prospective guidance for compliant physician employment and management arrangements;
- Ensures implementation does not destabilize existing practices or reduce patient access to care; and
- Supports a stable and sustainable physician workforce in Rhode Island.

RIMS appreciates the Committee's attention to this complex issue and stands ready to serve as a resource as the legislation is refined and moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'NH', written in a cursive style.

Nadine Himelfarb, MD
President