



RI Department of Health
Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

TTY: 771
www.health.ri.gov

April 9, 2026

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

RE: H 8365 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – International Public Health Collaboration

Dear Chair Donovan:

Please accept this letter of support for H 8365, legislation that would authorize the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to participate in international public health collaboration networks. This act would take effect upon passage.

Specifically, the bill authorizes RIDOH to:

- Participate in international public-health collaboration network including, but not limited to, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN);
- Enter into public-health collaboration agreements with federal agencies, international organizations, academic institutions, and public health authorities;
- Designate a State public health office, Department of Health laboratory, or program as the institutional partner representing the State in such networks;
- Participate in training programs, data-sharing initiatives, and technical assistance programs related to outbreak detection and response; and
- Provide voluntary deployment of qualified public health personnel, where possible, to assist in outbreak investigations or response efforts coordinated through such networks.

RIDOH does not already engage in these activities because the United States is no longer a member of the World Health Organization (WHO), so participating in GOARN allows RIDOH to have better visibility of what is happening globally with infectious disease so RIDOH can continue to help keep Rhode Islanders safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerome M. Larkin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jerome M. Larkin, MD
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services
The Honorable Kathleen A. Fogarty
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy

