

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

April 14, 2026

Via email to: [HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov](mailto:HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov)

**RE: Opposition to House Bill 7740, An act relating to business and professions – nurses**

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the HHS Committee,

My name is H. Christoph Stretz from House District 24, and I am a stroke and critical care neurologist working as an attending physician in the Neurocritical Care Unit and the Stroke service at Rhode Island Hospital.

I oppose House Bill 7740 due to its potential to severely impact the delivery of timely, safe, and high-quality care to patients in the Neurocritical Care Unit as well as critical care and emergency settings.

Specific concerns I would like to emphasize:

- Prior versions of this bill have been introduced in 2024 and 2025, and House Bill 7740 is nearly identical to House Bill 5428 introduced in 2025.
- House Bill does not clearly distinguish between the practice of nurses and nurse practitioners, yet both professional groups have different scopes of practice.
- House Bill 7740 seeks to legislate the practice of medicine, more specifically the scope of practice for sedation. However, during last year's legislative sessions, consensus emerged that sedation-related policy should be addressed through regulatory framework through the Rhode Island Department of Health. Comprehensive regulatory guidance through multi-disciplinary input is currently underway and release for public comment is expected. The introduction of House Bill 7740, nearly unchanged from its prior version, House Bill 5428 in 2025, undercuts this ongoing collaborative process across Rhode Island and erodes trust in the process.
- It is important to note that while a medication is part of a class of drugs such as anesthetics, it may be used for indications such as anxiolysis or conscious sedation, rather than the

purpose of general anesthesia. Yet this bill would broadly limit the use of anesthetics, which is a group of different medications and challenging to define.

- The bill specifies it “would also detail each of those limited emergency circumstances” in which sedation may be administered in “critical lifesaving or emergency situations where there is a threat to life or limb”. These provisions potentially create ambiguity and delays in care in emergent or critical care settings; listing every specific emergency exception is neither feasible nor practical for patient care.
- Moreover, not all patients in neuro critical care and other critical care and emergency settings require intubation and mechanical ventilation. In non-intubated ICU patients, moderate sedation may be required to treat agitation due to acute brain injury or due to other critical illness, or for patient safety to avoid removal of critical medical devices such as central lines or intracranial monitors. Moderate sedation may also be required for procedures in the critical care and non-critical care setting in non-intubated patients.
- Passage of this bill would effectively severely limit the use of sedation by advance practice professionals in non-emergent situations in non-intubated critical care patients and the ED. The choice of medication use for sedation is commonly influenced by many factors, including, but not limited to, a patient’s medical history, medication allergies, clinical status at the time, and, at times, factors beyond healthcare professionals or health systems’ control such as drug shortages.

In summary, the passage of this bill jeopardizes access and efficiency to patient-centered care in Neurocritical and other Critical Care units and emergency departments without improving outcomes.

I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 7740 and let the established regulatory process move forward. This will allow for policies based on clinical evidence, in line with federal standards and crafted through multi-disciplinary stakeholder involvement, to ensure continued access to safe, timely and high-quality care for patients here in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

H. Christoph Stretz, MD  
House District 24  
Warwick, RI