



April 14, 2026

Senate Committee on Finance
Rhode Island State House
SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: **Department of Health budget**

Dear Chair DiPalma and honorable committee members,

ABC-RI advocates for the rights and interests of Rhode Islanders in long-term care facilities and those receiving professional home care. We write to request that the committee recommend an **additional \$122,000** be added to the budget for the Department of Health to provide staff support needed to conduct annual inspections of assisted living residences with Special Dementia Care Units, as proposed in SB 2571. **Annual inspections were required for all assisted living residences until 2017, at which point the frequency was reduced to biennial.**

Meanwhile, the average acuity of assisted living residents has increased dramatically, and operators themselves describe today's assisted living as closer to yesterday's skilled nursing facility ([Senior Housing News, 4/16/25](#)). Preventable deaths and hospitalizations in RI's assisted living residences are too common, and when residents are not cognitively able to advocate for themselves, we cannot rely on them to raise the alarm themselves. **These residents are receiving more complex care under less oversight than before.**

Director Larkin, in his testimony regarding SB 2571, indicated that an additional FTE at a cost of \$121,742 would be required to increase the frequency of inspections of assisted living residences with SCUs—a small price to pay for improving the safety and care of some of our most vulnerable Rhode Islanders residing in assisted living.

We respectfully urge the Committee to recommend this additional funding that would allow for annual inspections of those assisted living residences with SCUs and help ensure quality care is being provided. We welcome the opportunity to provide additional information or answer questions. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue and for your service to all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gerard,
ABC-RI