

Senate Finance Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

May 5, 2026

Re: Testimony in Support of Senate bill 2831, titled An Act Relating To Health And Safety --  
Primary Care Training Sites Program

Dear Chairperson DiPalma and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am Thomas Meehan, PhD, PA-C from Barrington and Senate District 32. I am also the Program Director for the Physician Assistant Program at Johnson & Wales University which became the first University in Rhode Island to offer a PA program in 2014. With graduation this year, the program has graduated 357 PAs.

I support Senate bill 2831, titled An Act Relating To Health And Safety -- Primary Care Training Sites Program

I support bills 2831 because...

- Primary care practice in Rhode Island is at a critical junction with a current and emergent deficit in primary care practitioners at the MD, PA, and NP level. Even if you can find a provider that is taking new patients, the wait times for appointments are many months. The best medicine is preventative to avoid developing disease and not reactive. This is the focus of primary care.
- The Johnson & Wales PA program currently graduates 35 students per year. Of these graduates, about 10 practice in Rhode Island and only 4 practice in primary care in Rhode Island.
- The biggest limiting factor for increasing the class size is the deficiency in quality clinical training sites including primary care. PA students have required clinical rotations in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Pediatrics amongst other specialties.
- Bill 2831 re-affirms the primary care training site program. Training sites typically lose revenue when they take on a student as the preceptor sees less patients per day. This bill will allow primary care sites to receive grants to offset this loss of revenue thus encouraging more participation in precepting students.
- Additionally, this bill will standardize the training at each of these sites to promote consistent learning experiences for the student and an improved likelihood of the student staying in primary care. If more clinical training sites are available, programs will be able to train more students, thus increasing the number of practitioners staying in primary care upon graduation.
- One note in the current implementation of this program. The majority of clinical trainees are from universities outside of Rhode Island that send trainees into the state. These students often do not practice in Rhode Island upon graduation. A preference for Rhode Island based programs would alleviate some of this issue.

I urge you to vote in favor of bills 2831.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak in favor of this bill.

Sincerely,

Thomas Meehan, PhD, PA-C

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