

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



To: Senate Health and Human Services Committee
From: Scott A. Rivkees, MD
President, Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Date: 2/26/2026

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Testimony in SUPPORT of S. 2459

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

I am Scott Rivkees, a pediatrician, pediatric endocrinologist, and President of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, an organization representing more than 250 pediatricians in our state. I am the former State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health for the State of Florida.

Nationally, we observe corporate entities and private equity firms purchasing and directing medical practices. The motivation behind these acquisitions may involve revenue generation by the purchasing entity and infusion of capital resources, which may benefit the seller.

In many circumstances across this country, it has been observed that corporate ownership has infringed upon practitioners' ability to make clinical decisions.

According to the American Medical Association (*AMA draws a line on corporate intrusion into physician autonomy, Jun 9, 2025*), it is recommended that the following clinical decisions be made by the practitioner without interference.

- Determining which diagnostic tests are appropriate.
- Determining the need for referral or consultation with another clinician.
- Being responsible for the ultimate overall care of the patient, including treatment options available to the patient.
- Determining how many patients a physician shall see in a given period of time or how many hours a physician should work.
- Determining the content of patient medical records.
- Selecting, hiring, or firing physicians and other medical staff based on clinical competency or proficiency.
- Setting the parameters under which a physician or medical practice shall enter into contractual relationships with third-party entities.
- Making decisions regarding coding and billing procedures for patient care services.
- Approving the selection of medical equipment and medical supplies.

Furthermore, we recognize that there may be disputes between physicians and corporate entities regarding the above and other clinically-related activities. The development of practice-protection and dispute-resolution processes for practitioners advocating on patientcare and quality issues is also needed. Accordingly, each entity should have a utilization review board, comprised of medically licensed practitioners, with knowledge of, or the ability to refer to, accepted medical standards of care when addressing these disputes. If the practitioner believes the utilization review board's decisions are either untimely or inappropriate, processes should be developed to allow the practitioner to relay their concerns to the Rhode Island Board of Medicine.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Rivkees".

Scott A. Rivkees, M.D.
President, Rhode Island Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics

