

1 May 2026

The Honorable Melissa Murray Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

State House - 82 Smith Street, Room 101

Providence, RI 02903

RE: S2856– Support for S2851 – Expanding Access to Timely Care Through Pharmacists

Dear Chair Murray, Sponsor Lauria, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of **S2851**, which would allow pharmacists to test and treat certain common conditions where timely management is critical for both patient outcomes and community health.

Across the country, pharmacist-led test-and-treat programs for conditions such as influenza, strep, and uncomplicated infections have demonstrated outcomes comparable to traditional primary care settings. Currently, 42 states allow pharmacists to perform point-of-care testing, and 30 allow pharmacists to initiate treatment based on those results. Rhode Island has an opportunity to join this proven, patient-centered model.

Pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare professionals. Patients can be treated evenings, weekends, and holidays—often significantly faster than they could access urgent care or primary care. Because pharmacists maintain up-to-date medication lists and allergy histories, they are well positioned to safely manage these conditions while coordinating care with other providers as needed.

Importantly, this legislation does not replace the physician or advanced practice provider–patient relationship. Instead, it strengthens the healthcare team by allowing pharmacists to manage routine, time-sensitive conditions, freeing other providers to focus on more complex care.

From a system perspective, test-and-treat authority reduces avoidable emergency department utilization and lowers overall healthcare costs. Studies consistently show that pharmacist-led clinical services generate substantial returns on investment through avoided downstream costs.

For patients facing long wait times due to the ongoing primary care shortage, this bill represents a meaningful and responsible expansion of access to care. I respectfully urge the Committee to advance S2851.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued work on improving health care access in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Kennedy, PharmD, MHA

Warwick, RI