



## Rhode Island Health Care Association

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2026 -- S 3056

### JOINT RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE MEDICAID SECTION 1115 DEMONSTRATION WAIVER REQUESTS AND RENEWALS

Date: March 24, 2026

Position: Support

Chair Murray and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Health Care Association and our sixty-three (63) member nursing facilities, I respectfully submit testimony in support of Senate Resolution 3056. This legislation seeks to expand access to appropriate placements for individuals with behavioral health needs by allowing care in settings less restrictive than inpatient hospitalization.

Our members strongly support the intent of this legislation. Rhode Island continues to face significant challenges in ensuring individuals with behavioral health conditions receive care in the most appropriate, least restrictive setting. Too often, patients remain in acute care hospitals longer than medically necessary due to a lack of step-down options. This contributes to hospital overcrowding, delays in care for others, and does not meet the long-term needs of the patient.

Revising the language to implement a behavioral health per-diem add-on for complex patients based on clinical need, rather than a six-month hospitalization requirement, is critical. This approach ensures residents receive care aligned with their documented behaviors over 30 days, allowing placement in the most appropriate setting.

Skilled nursing facilities can fill this gap. Many individuals with behavioral health diagnoses do not require the intensity of an inpatient psychiatric setting but still need structured support, medication management, and clinical oversight. Senate Resolution 3056 provides an opportunity to better match patient needs with the appropriate level of care.

Caring for individuals with behavioral health conditions requires resources beyond traditional nursing care, including enhanced staffing ratios, specialized training, behavioral programming, care coordination, and access to psychiatric and therapeutic services. Facilities must be equipped to manage complex behaviors safely through de-escalation strategies and individualized care planning.

Current Medicaid rates do not reflect the additional resources required for post-acute behavioral health care. Without appropriate reimbursement, facilities cannot maintain or expand the specialized programs necessary to support these patients.

*"Setting the Pace in Nursing Home Care"*

A non-profit organization of proprietary and non-proprietary long term health care facilities dedicated to improving health care of the convalescent and chronically ill of all ages. An equal opportunity employer.

If Senate Bill 3056 is to succeed in expanding access and improving outcomes, reimbursement must reflect the true cost of care. Investing in these services at the Medicaid level will reduce hospital strain, improve patient flow, and ensure individuals receive care in a more appropriate, therapeutic environment.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to this issue and urge your support of Senate Resolution 3056.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John E. Gage". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

John E. Gage  
President and CEO  
Rhode Island Health Care Association