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Rhode Island General Assembly, State Senate
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
(Submitted electronically via SLegislation@rilegislature.gov)

Re: Support for Senate Bill 3057

Dear Chairperson Murray and Members of the Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter in strong **support of Senate Bill 3057**, which will establish a Commission to study Rhode Island's healthcare workforce related to educating and retaining primary care providers.

Rhode Island's eight community health centers provide primary care to more than 220,000 individuals, regardless of their ability to pay. Primary care providers are essential to meeting patients' needs, yet, like many practices, health centers face ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining providers, particularly physicians.

The state has implemented initiatives to strengthen recruitment and retention in the healthcare workforce. These include programs such as the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program and the Wavemaker Fellowship tax credits. Despite these efforts, Rhode Island continues to fall short of meeting its primary care workforce needs.

Of the 106 physician graduates from Rhode Island medical programs in the 2022–2023 academic year, only 29% (31) entered primary care training programs, and just 14% (15) remained in Rhode Island. In the same year, 144 graduates from nurse practitioner and physician assistant programs completed training; 42% (61) entered primary care, and 33% (48) remained in the state.

As the state considers investments in a medical school, it should also prioritize funding for primary care residency programs, including training residents at Rhode Island Federally Qualified Health Centers that operate ACGME-accredited, primary care–focused residency programs. Expanding in-state training opportunities can help improve retention rates, particularly among family physicians, who make up a significant share of the primary care workforce.¹

¹ Michael Topmiller et al., "Majority of Family Physicians Still Choose To Practice in the State Where They Were Trained," *Health Affairs*, vol. 45, no. 3 (2026), pp. 246–250, <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2025.01003>

Addressing primary care shortages will require aligning existing and future efforts, targeting high-need areas, supporting clear career pathways, and creating sustainable incentives for long-term retention.

We thank you for your consideration and Senator Lauria for sponsoring this resolution and ensuring representation from the community health centers on the Commission.

Sincerely,

M Campbell

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager

The Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program
East Bay Community Action Program ~ Providence Community Health Centers
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action Agency
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health