



To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
From: Care New England Health System
Date: March 24, 2026
Subject: **Support for S 3063** – Creation of a Special Legislative Commission to Study the Impact of Medical Malpractice on Rhode Island Health Care Providers and Health Care Costs

Dear Chairwoman Murray and members of the Committee,

On behalf of Care New England, I write in **strong support of S 3063**, legislation creating a special legislative commission to conduct a comprehensive study of medical malpractice and its impact on health care providers and health care costs in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island’s healthcare system is under extraordinary strain. Providers across the state face persistent workforce shortages, increasing operating costs, and growing challenges in recruiting and retaining physicians, nurses, and other clinicians. A significant and often under-examined contributor to these challenges is Rhode Island’s professional liability environment.

The risk and cost associated with medical malpractice litigation in Rhode Island has a direct and measurable impact on provider behavior and system sustainability. An unfavorable liability climate discourages providers from practicing in the state, accelerates retirements and relocations, and diverts limited healthcare resources away from patient care and toward defensive medicine and litigation expenses. These pressures ultimately affect access to care for Rhode Islanders and contribute to rising healthcare costs statewide.

At the same time, healthcare providers have sought legislative solutions to improve compensation and remain competitive with neighboring states. Addressing the professional liability environment represents another critical pathway to supporting the healthcare workforce—by keeping healthcare dollars invested in patient care rather than lost to an increasingly costly litigation system.

The proposed study commission offers a thoughtful, measured approach. By bringing together legislators, stakeholders, and experts, the commission can evaluate the scope of the issue, assess its impact on access, quality, and cost of care, and identify data-driven recommendations that balance patient protections with a fair and sustainable liability framework.

We believe this commission is an essential first step toward informed policymaking that strengthens Rhode Island’s healthcare system, supports its workforce, and protects patients now and in the future.

For these reasons, **Care New England respectfully urges the Senate to support S 3063.**

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the health of all Rhode Islanders.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Wagner, MD

Care New England Health System