



# RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL SOCIETY

Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Room 35  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: 24HB-7902 and 7903

SUPPORT (FOR)

May 15, 2024

Dear Chairman Abney,

The Rhode Island Medical Society would like to thank Representative Fogarty for introducing H 7902, An Act Relating To Health And Safety -- Primary Care Training Sites Program as well as H 7903, An Act Relating To Health And Safety -- The Medical Primary Care Scholarship Program. These crucial pieces of legislation are aimed at strengthening and diversifying Rhode Island's primary care workforce—a need that has never been more critical.

Rhode Island is facing a rapidly escalating shortage of primary care providers. This is a multi-faceted problem: our primary care workforce is aging, and many providers are nearing retirement. At the same time, those who remain are experiencing unprecedented levels of burnout. This situation threatens not only the health and well-being of our population but also the stability and effectiveness of our healthcare system.

The December 2023 report from the Office of Health Insurance Commissioner provides a clear and actionable roadmap for addressing these challenges. Among the key strategies recommended is an emphasis on primary care workforce training. House Bills 7902 and 7903 help address this recommendation, proposing vital measures to ensure a pipeline of well-trained primary care professionals ready to serve our communities.

House Bill 7902 proposes innovative approaches to primary care training, including enhanced residency programs and partnerships with academic institutions. House Bill 7903 focuses on incentives for new physicians to practice in underserved areas, improving access to quality care across our state.

The Rhode Island Medical Society believes that by supporting these bills, we are taking a critical step towards a more effective, resilient, and diverse primary care system. We urge swift passage of House Bills 7902 and 7903 to begin the work necessary to help ensure the health of Rhode Islanders now and into the future.

Thank you for considering this critical issue. We are committed to working with all stakeholders to advance these initiatives and appreciate your leadership in moving these important bills forward.

Founded in 1812, the Rhode Island Medical Society (RIMS) is the eighth oldest medical society in the country. RIMS is the vehicle by which the medical community in Rhode Island meets the evolving challenges of medical practice and quality patient care.

Please let us know if we can provide any additional information or if you have any questions on our testimony. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Heather Smith, MD, MPH  
President