



May 15, 2024

Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI, 02903

Re: Support H7902 and H7903

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter of support for House Bill 7902, which would establish the primary care training sites program, and House Bill 7903, which would establish the medical primary care scholarship program.

RIHCA supports the state's eight Community Health Centers (CHC) in their efforts to provide high-quality health care to every Rhode Islander, regardless of their ability to pay. CHCs are the primary care safety-net providers for over 200,000 individuals: 90% of their patients have incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (less than \$52,000 per year for a family of 3), 55% of their patients are enrolled in Medicaid, and 9% are uninsured. The number of people served by a CHC in Rhode Island increased by 18% between 2017 and 2022 without a commensurate increase in the workforce. However, there are not enough primary care clinicians to meet patients' needs.

Rhode Island can help begin to solve its primary care clinician shortages through investments in primary care.

- House Bill 7902 would help fund training sites, which play a crucial role in ensuring that primary care providers have the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to deliver comprehensive, evidence-based care to their patients.
- House Bill 7903 would help to address the medical education debt that is a significant barrier for individuals pursuing careers in primary care, particularly in underserved areas where salaries may be lower compared to specialty fields.

Your support of both bills is a first step in helping to ensure our state has the funding resources needed to grow our future primary care workforce. Thank you for your consideration.

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