



**Alex Moore, Political Director**

**SEIU 1199NE**

**319 Broadway**

**Providence, RI 02909**

**May 1, 2024**

**Subject: Support for H-8078: Enhancing Education and Diversity in Healthcare**

**Dear Members of the House Committee on Finance,**

**On behalf of SEIU 1199NE, representing over 5,000 healthcare, service workers, and child care providers across Rhode Island, I am writing to express our strong support for Bill H-8078. This critical legislation aims to establish a grant program directed by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), in collaboration with the Department of Labor and Training (DLT) and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. This initiative is designed to provide healthcare paraprofessionals with opportunities to pursue higher education degrees and obtain health professional licensure, with the goal of increasing the diversity of our health professional workforce.**

**The importance of this bill cannot be overstated. By facilitating advanced educational opportunities for healthcare paraprofessionals, particularly those from underrepresented communities, H-8078 addresses a critical barrier to career advancement within our healthcare system. This initiative not only supports individual career growth but also enhances the quality of care provided to our communities by diversifying and expanding the professional skills within our healthcare workforce.**

**For example, a nursing assistant within our union could leverage this program to become a licensed practical nurse or even a registered nurse, significantly improving her career prospects and ability to contribute to patient care. The ripple effects of such career advancements are profound, leading to improved health outcomes, greater job satisfaction, and economic growth within our community.**

**We believe that the passage of H-8078 will create a more equitable and effective healthcare system by providing essential resources for continuing education and professional development.**

These efforts will support a healthcare workforce that is as diverse as the Rhode Island community it serves.

We urge you to support this legislation and help us build a stronger, more inclusive healthcare environment for everyone in Rhode Island.

Thank you for considering our strong support for this bill. We look forward to its successful passage and the positive impact it will undoubtedly have on our state.

Sincerely,

Alex Moore