

Rhode Island Chapter

INCORPORATED IN RHODE ISLAND

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Officers

President

Peter Pogacar, MD, FAAP
Phone: 401/884-8900
ppogacar@gmail.com

Vice President

Scott Rivkees, MD, FAAP
Phone: 203/641-2545
scott_rivkees@brown.edu

Secretary

Shuba Kamath, MD, FAAP
Phone: 401/444-8531
shuba_kamath@brown.edu

Treasurer

Sara Ford, MD, FAAP
Phone: 401/444-4612
SFord@lifespan.org

Immediate Past President

Allison Brindle, MD, FAAP
Phone: 401/444-8531
allisonbrindle@gmail.com

Chapter Executive Director

Jennifer L. Mann, MPH
Phone: 401/743-1507
jmann.aapri@gmail.com

Board of Directors

Emily Allen, MD, FAAP
Ailis Clyne, MD, FAAP
Diane DerMarderosian, MD, FAAP
Susan Duffy, MD, FAAP
Patricia J. Flanagan, MD, FAAP
Gregory Fox, MD, FAAP
Natalie Golova, MD, FAAP
Allison, Heinely, MD, FAAP
Pamela High, MD, FAAP
William H. Hollinshead, MD, FAAP
Chandan Lakhani, MD, FAAP
Elizabeth Lange, MD, FAAP
Kristin Lombardi, MD, FAAP
Karen Maule, MD, FAAP
Beth Toolan, MD, FAAP

Mailing Address:

American Academy of Pediatrics
Rhode Island Chapter
PO Box 20365
Cranston, RI 02920

3/25/2025

Testimony in Opposition of Department of Health Budget, H-5076

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on the behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to express my opposition of the Department of Health line items of FY2026 Budget, which does not include the \$356,000 in state funding that would allow Rhode Island to receive an additional \$1.1 million in federal funding to support of evidence based family home visiting in Rhode Island.

I have been a practicing pediatrician in Rhode Island for the past 25 years and have seen the effects of home visiting on infants and families. The first weeks and months of life are crucial for bonding between mother and baby, initiation of breast feeding, and establishment of routines to enhance infant development. The presence of a trained, nurturing professional in the home of a new family is an opportunity to provide advice and support which set the foundation for growth and development throughout childhood.

One family that stands out in my mind is a young, single mom who was suffering from post partum depression. She enrolled in Parents as Teachers who gave her the support she needed to get herself and her daughter to their appointments, and stayed involved through infancy and toddlerhood to help monitor her daughter's development and behavior. After helping mom enroll her daughter in a public PreK program, they were able to sign off the case, leaving this family with a solid foundation for learning.

Rhode Island's family visiting program has been suffering for the past several years, with staff shortages and declining enrollment. It's disappointing that the governor's budget does include this critical investment to turn these trends around and support young children and their families as they navigate such an important and challenging part of life. On the behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I ask you to reject the proposed RIDOH budget until funding is included at the appropriate level.

Sincerely,

Gregory Fox, MD, FAAP

Advocacy Chair

Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics