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TTY: 771
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March 12, 2024

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan
Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H 7826 – An Act Relating to Businesses and Professions - Nurses

Dear Chair Donovan:

Please accept this letter in support of H 5349 that would amend the conditions upon which a nurse would be exempt from certain licensing requirements to include eligibility to practice before taking and receiving results of the NCLEX exam.

Rhode Island General Laws § 5-34-31 allows graduates who take the national NCLEX test to be temporarily licensed (and work) after they take the NCLEX, while they wait for their test results. The statute states that they can be licensed pending the results of the examinations. The proposed legislation would also allow RIDOH to temporarily license nurse graduates *before* they schedule the NCLEX. This proposed change would allow those nurse graduates to enter the workforce earlier than currently allowed by statute. Finally, the proposed legislation also clarifies when the temporary licensing timeline of 90 days begins.

Currently, a healthcare professional workforce shortage exists both nationally and in Rhode Island. This bill would allow nursing student graduates to enter the workforce earlier in the process. On January 27, 2022, the Governor issued Executive Order (EO) 22-08, which suspended the condition of the statutory exemption in RIGLs § 5-34-31 (2) that applies to the practice of nursing “pending the results of the licensing examinations following their graduation” provided that nurse graduates “apply and receive temporary graduate licenses that are valid for a period not exceeding 90 days”, “work under the supervision of an RN”, and “comply with other applicable requirements.” This EO was extended as part of EO 22-22, which expired on March 31, 2022.

The proposed statutory change would codify that EO into law. This change will allow a larger pool of nurse graduates to be temporarily licensed (and work) while they

schedule and pass the NCLEX. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Utpala Bandy", followed by the word "for" written in a smaller, simpler font.

Utpala Bandy, MD, MPH
Interim Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Stephen M. Casey
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy