



To: House Health & Human Services Committee
From: Karen Malcolm, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition, ProtectRIHealth@gmail.com
Date: March 26, 2025
Re: **SUPPORT H5257 – Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board**

The Protect Our Healthcare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a shared mission to protect, improve, and expand equitable access to quality, person-centered, affordable health care for all. The Coalition strongly **supports House Bill 5257** because it will raise the standard of care for vulnerable nursing home patients.

A 2022 consensus report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine noted that “Nursing homes play a unique dual role in the long-term care continuum, serving as a place where people receive needed health care and a place they call home.”¹ Among their conclusions, the researchers highlight that “the current system often fails to provide high-quality care and underappreciates and underprepares nursing home staff for their critical responsibilities. They further conclude that **“immediate action to initiate fundamental change is necessary.”**

Our experience in Rhode Island substantiates this finding, with the number of serious deficiencies reported between 2021 and June 2023 rising from an average of 5.8 to 8.8 per certified home². 2024 saw nearly the same number of serious deficiencies reported as in 2023. These deficiencies are indicators of problems that can gravely affect the health and safety of our nursing home residents.

With an estimated 6,900 Rhode Islanders currently residing in nursing homes, the need for immediate action to improve their care is undeniable – **which makes redressing last year’s veto by the Governor of this important legislation urgent.**

We urge the Committee to support H5257, which would improve the well-being and quality of life for our thousands of nursing home patients and their caretakers.

Thank you.

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include: Economic Progress Institute, RIPIN, Mental Health Association RI, RI Health Center Association, Latino Policy Institute, Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone (CPO-HEZ), United Way of Rhode Island, Senior Agenda Coalition RI, RI Medical Society, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, RI Community Food Bank, RI Psychological Association, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), National Association of Social Workers RI Chapter, The Womxn Project, Advocates for Better Care

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK584660/>

² <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/avg-of-nursing-facility-deficiencies/>