



M. Teresa Paiva Weed
President

February 15, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chairman, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Re: SUPPORT – H.7169

Dear Chairman Craven:

The Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) and its member strongly support H.7169, an act which makes statements of apology or sympathy by a health care provider inadmissible as evidence of an admission of liability regarding the unanticipated outcome of a patient's medical care and treatment.

Expressing apology or sympathy for unanticipated outcomes is important for healthcare professionals for several reasons, and creating an environment where they can do so without fear of liability is equally important. First, healthcare is inherently human. Acknowledging the emotional aspects of medical care humanizes the profession. Patients and their families appreciate healthcare providers who express genuine concern, reinforcing the understanding that healthcare professionals are compassionate individuals dedicated to their well-being.

Second, healthcare professionals often experience emotional distress when patients face adverse outcomes. Allowing them to express empathy and regret without fear of liability provides a channel for coping and healing, contributing to their overall well-being.

Finally, creating an environment where healthcare professionals can express apology or sympathy without fear of liability is essential for promoting patient-centered care, building trust, and fostering open communication. It contributes to the overall well-being of both patients and healthcare providers while supporting a culture of continuous improvement within the healthcare system.

For these reasons HARI and its members support passage of H.7169 and appreciate your commitment to the well-being of our community and your ongoing efforts to create a healthcare environment that fosters a culture of understanding and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa P. Tomasso".

Lisa P. Tomasso
Senior Vice President