



Howard M. Dulude  
Interim President

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Stephen M. Casey  
House Municipal Government and Housing Committee  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, Rhode Island 02905

**RE: H.5953 – Support with amendment**

Dear Chair Casey:

On behalf of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island (HARI) and our member hospitals, we write in support of H.5953, introduced by Representative Tanzi, which seeks to improve coordination around warming and cooling centers across the state.

As this past winter highlighted, the current patchwork approach to opening and communicating the availability of warming centers makes it difficult for providers—particularly hospital emergency departments—to assist vulnerable individuals who often turn to hospitals as a last resort for shelter.

While we support the intent of the bill, we respectfully request that hospitals be explicitly included in the planning and notification framework. Regardless of nonprofit status, hospitals are frontline providers of care for at-risk populations and should be engaged as partners in emergency planning efforts.

We recommend amending Section (b) to include hospitals among the entities to be notified and consulted in warming center planning, ensuring that emergency departments can access timely, centralized information about shelter availability, accessibility, and transportation options. This is critical when discharging unhoused patients who may have no safe destination.

We look forward to working with the bill sponsor and the committee to strengthen this legislation and ensure that hospitals can continue to support the most vulnerable members of our communities during extreme weather events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa P. Tomasso", written in a cursive style.

Lisa P. Tomasso  
Senior Vice President