

# Take action today to help fix our primary care crisis

## THE ISSUE:

Rhode Island is experiencing a historic primary care workforce crisis. From record rates of physician burnout, to early retirements, to a severe lack of new physicians and staff entering primary care, it's estimated that 200,000 Rhode Islanders will not have access to primary care by 2030. **New legislative bills proposed in the Rhode Island House and Senate will help directly address the primary care crisis, and legislators need to hear they have support!**

**S-2716** and **H-7902** provide new funding to clinical training sites in RI, with specific primary care training criteria and curriculum. This fills a huge gap in primary care training in our state, ensuring training sites can dedicate capacity and resources to growing our future workforce.

**S-2717** and **H-7903** fund a four-year scholarship program for primary care physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants. The students would either remain in RI after medical school or return to RI after residency training in Family Medicine, Pediatrics, or General Internal Medicine to practice primary care for 8 years. The goals would be to encourage medical students to practice in these fields due to the reduction or elimination of their student debt.

**H-8079** appropriates \$1,000,000 annually for the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program, helping Rhode Island recruit and retain our future representative primary care and broader healthcare workforce, from nurses to audiologists.

**H-8078** and **S-2867** implement a new grant program to fund public and private partnerships that provide "ladders to licensure" – pathways for healthcare paraprofessionals to pursue higher education degrees and health professional licensure, including behavioral health and nursing. Importantly, this will also help diversify our workforce.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP – 3 EASY STEPS:

1. **Send a letter or email** to your state senator and state representative, along with key leaders we've identified in the blue box to the right. (See attached Word document letter template for help.)
2. **Call** your state senator and state representative.
3. **Share a copy** of your letters/emails with us ([ctc-ri@ctc-ri.org](mailto:ctc-ri@ctc-ri.org)) – we're keeping record in preparation for upcoming legislative hearings to demonstrate strong support from our primary care community.

Consider using the below as a guide in drafting your message. In addition, the attached Word doc. provides a more detailed letter template for your use:

- *Mention of living, or working, in the Senator or Representative's district when applicable, along with your role/link to the primary care industry.*
- *We can't wait for thousands of Rhode Islanders to be left without primary care. It's critical we take immediate steps to address our critical workforce crisis. [Insert bill number(s)] will do just that.*
- *I've seen firsthand the impact our workforce crisis has had on families and primary care staff across our state [example or two].*
- *We can't wait to fix this – [insert bill number(s)] addresses our state's urgent need. Please support this legislation!*

## WANT TO DO EVEN MORE?

If you're interested in supporting our advocacy efforts further, there is an opportunity for you to submit a letter to your local newspaper to elevate the importance of these bills! Please email [ctc-ri@ctc-ri.org](mailto:ctc-ri@ctc-ri.org) and we'll help you.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

We're monitoring these key pieces of legislation and hope they will be scheduled for hearings soon before the House and Senate Finance Committees. When they are scheduled for a hearing, we'll need a strong show of support. There may only be a 24 hour notice ahead of a hearing. We'll contact our community to share the opportunity to testify at these hearings.

## WHO TO CONTACT

(Your Senator, Rep. & Key Committee Leaders)

1. Visit [vote.sos.ri.gov](http://vote.sos.ri.gov) & click "Find Your Elected Officials"
2. Enter your address (home and primary care site – we encourage both!)
3. Your **State Senator** and **State Rep.** will be listed at the bottom. Click their names to see their email address and phone number.
4. We also encourage **writing to the additional below leaders:**

- **House Speaker Joseph Shekarchi**  
([rep-shekarchi@rilegislature.gov](mailto:rep-shekarchi@rilegislature.gov))
- **Senate President Dominick Ruggerio**  
([sen-ruggerio@rilegislature.gov](mailto:sen-ruggerio@rilegislature.gov))
- **House Finance Committee Chair Rep. Marvin Abney**  
([rep-abney@rilegislature.gov](mailto:rep-abney@rilegislature.gov))
- **Senate Finance Committee Chair Sen. Louis DiPalma**  
([sen-dipalma@rilegislature.gov](mailto:sen-dipalma@rilegislature.gov))