



Howard M. Dulude
Interim President

February 4, 2025

The Honorable [Legislator's Name]
[Legislator's Office Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Legislator's Name],

On behalf of our hundreds of thousands of patients and the over 70,000 doctors, nurses, and other health care workers in Rhode Island, we are writing to express our deep concern regarding Governor Dan McKee's proposed budget for FY 2026, which includes over \$25 million in hospital payment cuts and an increase in the hospital tax. These recommendations threaten to exacerbate the ongoing health care crisis in Rhode Island and jeopardize access to care for the residents across the state who are already struggling to receive timely and adequate medical attention.

The entire continuum of care in Rhode Island is already facing significant financial challenges due to persistently low reimbursement rates. These cuts will further strain health care facilities, forcing many to make difficult decisions such as reducing staff or cutting services altogether.

When recently asked about health care in the state, more than half of Rhode Islanders experienced difficulty accessing health care last year, with many unable to schedule appointments with specialists or obtain care in a timely manner. Additional cuts will only worsen the situation, leading to longer wait times, reduced access to specialists, and increased reliance on emergency rooms for care. Hospitals, already struggling to stay afloat and meet the needs of our communities, will be forced to make difficult decisions that will impact care and the workforce.

In addition to the financial pressures on hospitals, Rhode Island is facing a significant shortage of health care workers, as many professionals are leaving the state for higher-paying opportunities in neighboring states. The inability to offer competitive pay due to low reimbursement rates has made it harder to recruit and retain medical professionals.

To stabilize and improve care for residents, the Association has developed solutions to maximize federal reimbursement through Rhode Island's Medicaid program. By increasing Medicaid reimbursements and ensuring regionally competitive payments from private insurers, these efforts would address current challenges and strengthen the health care workforce.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to working with you this session.

Sincerely,

Howard M. Dulude, Interim President
Hospital Association of Rhode Island

Nick Dominick, Interim President
Newport Hospital

Maria Ducharme, President
Miriam Hospital

John Fernandez, President and Chief Executive Officer
Brown University Health

Ana Tuya Fulton, MD
Chief Population Health Officer, Care New England and
President and Chief Operating Officer, Integra Community Care Network

Sarah Frost, Chief of Hospital Operations, Brown University Health and
President, Rhode Island Hospital

Sheri Godfrin, Chief Executive Officer
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Paari Gopalakrishnan, MD, President and Chief Operating Officer
Kent Hospital

Jeffrey Liebman, Chief Executive Officer
CharterCARE Health Partners

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Mary Marran, President and Chief Operating Officer
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Patricia Poitevien, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Hasbro Children's Hospital and
Senior Associate Dean, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University

Aaron Robinson, President and Chief Executive Officer
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Hospital Association of Rhode Island Vice Chair

Henry Sachs III, MD, President
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Michael Souza, Chief Executive Officer
Landmark Medical Center

Shannon Sullivan, President and Chief Operating Officer
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Michael Wagner, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer
Care New England