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**RI Health Care Association Vehemently**

**Opposes Nursing Home Staffing Bill**

**Legislation Would Force Closure of Nursing Homes**

Warwick, Rhode Island: The Rhode Island Health Care Association (RIHCA) announced today their vehement opposition to the House of Representatives amended version of the nursing home staffing bill (H 5012 Substitute A). This bill is neither a staffing bill, nor a quality care bill.

President and CEO of RIHCA Scott Fraser noted “This bill is simply bad public policy and will result in the closure of nursing homes in our state. The bill is a $75 million unfunded mandate that will do the exact opposite of what it is intended to do – it will lower the quality of care and will not improve it. Money will have to be taken from existing quality driven categories like therapy and redirected to meet these new and arbitrary staffing standards. Further, even if the bill were to be properly funded the new staffing standards are impossible to meet. The people to fill these new vacancies simply do not exist. This is a bad bill for our frail, elderly residents; this is a bad bill for their families, and it is a bad bill for existing staff who will ultimately lose their jobs. Passage of this bill will be a colossal failure by every measure of public policy.”

Despite a doubling of the state’s elderly population over the past twenty years, Rhode Island has already seen the closure of 25% of its nursing homes. With the state’s elderly population doubling again, over the next 20 years, who will care for our most frail elderly as our state’s Homes disappear? This bill exacerbates that growing problem.

“The result of this legislation, should it become law, will be to force our most vulnerable residents out of skilled nursing homes. No one should be happy about that result. This bill is short sighted and not in the best interests of the people of Rhode Island.” concluded Fraser.