



April 28,2022

**TO: Chairman Marvin Abney
Members, House Finance Committee**

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF H7615 – Maureen Maignet, Senior Agenda Policy Advisor

On behalf of the Senior Agenda Coalition of Rhode Island I am pleased to support H7615 by Representative Kazarian which would provide for a 20% add-on to the Medicaid per-diem rate for nursing homes that offer single-occupancy rooms and bathrooms.

With its extreme impact on nursing home residents in terms of deaths and hospitalizations, the pandemic forces us to look at how traditional nursing home double occupancy rooms with shared baths present significant challenges in infection control.

In addition, having to share a room and bathroom -- most likely with a complete stranger – during some of the most intimate and private aspects of life is not how our frail older adults should have to live. Research has shown that single rooms decrease the risk of acquiring and spreading infections and promote resident physical and mental well-being.

Nursing home occupancy decreased during the pandemic and remains down. Now is the time to rethink how we provide nursing home care. The current institutional model is based on how hospitals were constructed 50 years ago and must change to reflect current research and best practices.

Among its many recommendations, the recently released National Academies Report, [*The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality: Honoring Our Commitment to Residents, Families, and Staff*](#)¹ recommends:

“RECOMMENDATION 1E: Nursing homeowners, with the support of federal and state governmental agencies, should construct and reconfigure (renovate) nursing homes to provide smaller, more home-like environments and/or smaller units within larger nursing homes that promote infection control and person-centered care and activities.”

It specifically recommends that state licensure decisions should ensure that all new nursing homes are constructed with single-occupancy bedrooms and private bathrooms for most or all residents.

On a personal note, my mother had the good fortune to live out her last years at The Greenhouse, a nursing home operated by The Saint Elizabeth Community offering private room and baths and resident-centered care. This is what our nursing homes should look like and this bill will help us move in that direction.

¹ https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/049a7960-1c2a-4880-afdd-8d1e0e283acc/downloads/National%20Academies%20Nursing_Homes_Recommendatio.pdf?ver=1651000204924