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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING “NATIONAL WOMEN PHYSICIANS DAY” ON FEBRUARY 3RD OF  
2026, IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Chippendale, Diaz, Edwards,  
Batista, Kislak, Cruz, Giraldo, and Casimiro  
Date Introduced: February 03, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, National Women Physicians Day commemorates the birthday of Dr.  
2 Elizabeth Blackwell, who, in 1849, became the first woman to receive a medical degree in the  
3 United States; and

4 WHEREAS, Dr. Blackwell championed the participation of women in the medical field  
5 and ultimately opened her own medical college for women, the Women's Medical College in  
6 New York City. In addition, during the Civil War, she and her sisters worked closely with  
7 Florence Nightingale, training nurses for Union Hospitals, to provide care for the sick and  
8 wounded; and

9 WHEREAS, National Women Physicians Day honors the pioneering achievements and  
10 ongoing contributions of all female physicians in the field of health care, including the notable  
11 accomplishments of Dr. Velma Scantlebury-White, who was the first Black woman transplant  
12 surgeon in the United States and who, over her 40-year career, performed an estimated 2,000  
13 organ transplants; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. Velma Scantlebury-White is no stranger to overcoming challenges. She  
15 grew up in Barbados, and at the age of 15, immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, with her family.  
16 Pursuing her dream of becoming a physician, she eventually earned her medical degree from  
17 Columbia University, and eight years later, earned her Doctor of Surgery from Pitt School of  
18 Medicine, a first in the country; and

19 WHEREAS, Dr. Velma Scantlebury-White is recognized as one of the top doctors in the

1 United States and is passionate and dedicated to educating communities of color about the need  
2 for more organ donors and the rising number of patients in need of transplantation; and

3 WHEREAS, Since 1849, women physicians have made remarkable strides in health care,  
4 and as of early 2025, there were 424,000 female physicians in the United States, which is  
5 approximately 38.5 percent of the total active physician workforce; and

6 WHEREAS, In addition, over the course of the last five years, women have made up the  
7 majority of medical school applicants, matriculants, and enrollees making up over 57 percent of  
8 applicants; however, a 2021 report from the Rand Corporation found that female physicians earn  
9 \$90,000 to \$100,000 less than men each year; and

10 WHEREAS, Women physicians bring unique perspectives to patient care, and serve as  
11 leaders, educators, researchers and mentors to future generations; and

12 WHEREAS, National Women Physicians Day honors the achievements of female  
13 physicians and is a time to not only recognize the contributions of female physicians to  
14 healthcare, but to also inspire future generations of female physicians, and to advocate for equal  
15 pay and leadership opportunities; now, therefore be it

16 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
17 celebrates February 3, 2026, as “National Women Physicians Day”; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
19 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Mariah Stump, MD, MPH, President of the  
20 Board of Directors, Rhode Island Medical Women’s Association (RIMWA).

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