



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rhode Island Free Clinic, Thundermist Health Center Receive Grants to Help Deliver Care

A total of \$10,500 will help organizations meet unprecedented need for health services amid crisis

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – With the number of at-risk, low-income Rhode Islanders seeking health services during the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to increase, **Bank Rhode Island (BankRI)** has awarded a total of \$10,500 in emergency grants to the Rhode Island Free Clinic and Thundermist Health Center.

“Never have we seen demand like this before in the history of the clinic,” said Marie Ghazal, DNP, RN, Chief Executive Officer of the R.I. Free Clinic. “Our organization is funded entirely through philanthropy and the generosity of donors. This grant allows us to continue providing the services that our community so desperately needs right now.”

After an initial disruption to its services at the onset of the pandemic, the Free Clinic in May opened a COVID-19 test site specifically for uninsured adults who have no doctor and who have been hit hardest by the crisis. As of the end of July, more than 70 percent of those tested by the Clinic were previously not clients of the organization.

“It is vital that these individuals get tested and cared for in order to limit further spread of the virus,” added Ghazal. “At the same time, the test site has become a new point of entry for people who have other underlying conditions they’ve been ignoring because they lack access to affordable care. And without this care, an already vulnerable population becomes even more at-risk for poor health outcomes.”

Thundermist Health Center, with locations in Woonsocket, West Warwick, and Wakefield, provides primary care including pediatrics, prenatal care, dental, behavioral health, and more. Annually, the organization serves more than 51,000 Rhode Islanders with and without health insurance. Thundermist will use its grant to deliver care, support COVID-19 testing, and address food insecurity during this unprecedented crisis.

“Primary care has an important role in addressing the COVID-19 crisis,” said Jeanne LaChance, President and CEO of Thundermist Health Center. “Thundermist offers care and testing for COVID-19 in respiratory tents in Woonsocket and West Warwick. In addition, we quickly adapted to provide patients with care by telephone and video when in-person appointments are not possible. Finally, we are working hard to address food insecurity, disruptions to housing, and access to basic personal necessities, which are all important components of a person’s overall health. None of this would be possible without support from community partners like BankRI.”

Added Mark J. Meiklejohn, President and CEO of BankRI, “The strain on our state’s nonprofit community, particularly among health-based organizations on the frontline has been tremendous. As they continue to see more and more Rhode Islanders seeking services, it is incumbent on all who can to help – we are grateful that our charitable dollars will help aid their important work.”

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About Bank Rhode Island

Bank Rhode Island, a wholly owned subsidiary of Brookline Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ:BRKL), is a full-service, FDIC-insured financial institution headquartered in Providence, Rhode Island. The bank operates 20 branches and more than 40 ATMs throughout Providence, Kent, Newport and Washington Counties. For more information, visit www.bankri.com. You can also find BankRI on [Facebook](#).

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