

Pamela L. Lopes  
Chief Implementation Aide, Legal Department  
Rhode Island Department of Health  
3 Capitol Hill, Room 404  
Providence, Rhode Island 02908  
401-222-1036 (office); 401-318-0935 (office cell)  
[Pamela.lopes@health.ri.gov](mailto:Pamela.lopes@health.ri.gov)

9/17/23

Dear Ms. Lopes,  
C.C: Representative Mike Chippendale  
re: APRA request detailing the “covid hospitalization modeling” information (assumptions, discussions, evaluations/re-evaluations of “model performance,” etc.), alluded to in then Governor Raimondo’s April 16, 2020 presser (archived at C-SPAN), and an April 30, 2020, oped in the Providence Journal written by then editorial page editor, Edward Achorn

## **BACKGROUND**

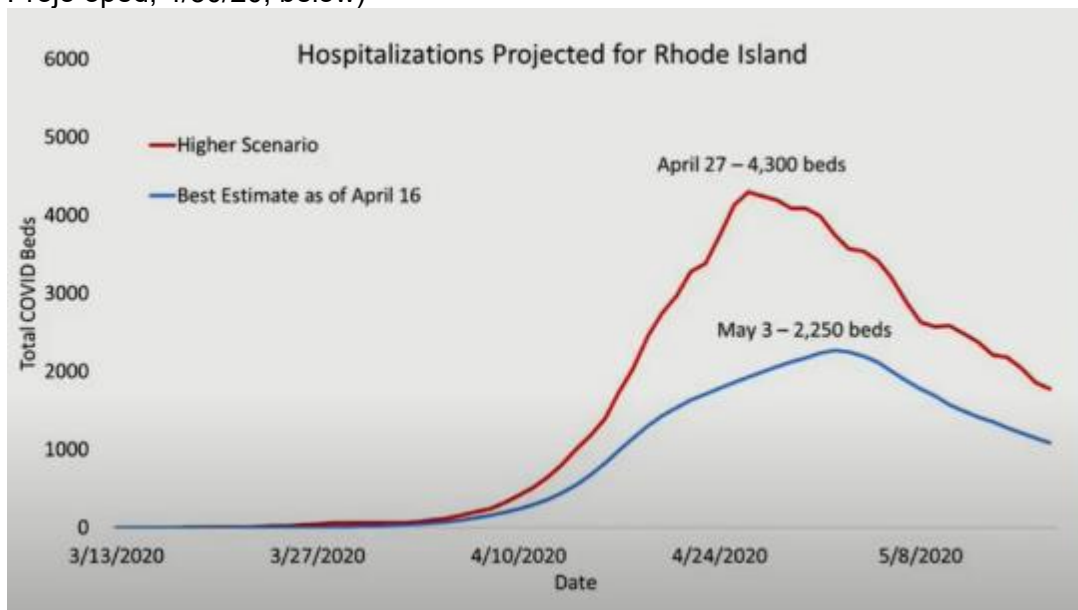
CSPAN Raimondo presser, April 16, 2020

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?471263-1/rhode-island-governor-raimondo-coronavirus-news-conference>

**Then Governor Raimondo:**

“It’s been a collaborative effort with the (Rhode Island) Department of Health [**RIDOH**], **our own experts, Brown University, and Brown University’s Policy Lab**. By the way, **I wanna give a huge shout out of thanks to Brown University**. I called you over a month ago, and **you gave us your very best statisticians and public health experts, and epidemiologists**. Thank you for being a great partner... **The blue line you could think of as our best guess of what we think the next few weeks will look like in Rhode Island. The blue line assumes all of the current restrictions—the stay at home order, the mask wearing, social distancing—are in place, and we are doing a pretty good job of adhering to them.** (Not a perfect job, but a good job of adhering to them.) In that scenario, we think our peak will be around May 3, 2020, that means last week of April, first week of May, approximately, and at that time, **we will need about 2,250... (O)n your screen, you should be seeing a red line.** That red line represents what we think will happen if we stop taking social distancing seriously. And in that scenario, the peak comes sooner, probably April 27th, and obviously the peak is much higher. In that scenario, the red line that you’re seeing, **we’ll need closer to 4,300 hospital beds.**”

(Screen shot of the actual models, displayed during the 4/16/20 presser, which also appeared in the Achorn Projo oped, 4/30/20, below)



From Edward Achorn Projo Oped Ed, 4/30/20

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200501053002/https://www.providencejournal.com/opinion/20200430/editorial-modeling-was-grossly-inaccurate> (pdf available here: [https://www.andrewbostom.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Achorn-4.30.20-projo\\_oped.pdf](https://www.andrewbostom.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Achorn-4.30.20-projo_oped.pdf)):

*“All of this modeling has been rather cloaked in obscurity. Legislative leaders this week had no idea who did the modeling and how much it cost. Jennifer Bogdan, the governor’s press secretary, revealed in an email: ‘the model was developed collaboratively with the R.I. Department of Health, Brown University and the Brown University Policy Lab based on a framework from Johns Hopkins University. There are no costs associated with the model,’ she added. The state certainly got its money’s worth. Though it is important to ‘trust the science,’ it is always a good idea to insist on full transparency when dealing with government. In the months ahead, as Rhode Island picks up the pieces, we hope the media and the legislature will look into how these models were created and whether we could have done better.”*

**“Actual” data refers to simple tabulations extracted from RIDOH’s own database spreadsheet <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1c2QrNMz8plbYEkzMJL7Uh2dtThOJa2j1sSMwiDo5Gz4/edit#gid=1592746937>, which I accessed, today, Sunday 9/17/23, and constructed the attached table:**

Type of Covid-19 Hospitalizations	Date	Number of Covid-19 Hospitalizations
Poor Social Distancing Model	4/27/20	4,300
Actual	4/27/20	357
Good Social Distancing Model	5/3/20	2,250
Actual	5/3/20	350

(\*Note: Actual “covid-19 hospitalization” absolute peak during the spring 2020 wave, was n=374, on 4/28/20, per database when also accessed 9/17/23)

\*\*\*

## REQUEST

I am requesting the following information, beginning March 1, 2020, through September 15, 2023:

- 1) A roster of those involved in constructing the covid hospitalization models displayed by Governor Raimondo 4/16/20, both at RIDOH and Brown University, with at least a summary of the modelers’ roles and responsibilities
- 2) The Specific data used, and assumptions made, in constructing the final models presented by Governor Raimondo 4/16/20.
- 3) All correspondence and discussion of the 4/16/20 models performance, juxtaposed to actual covid hospitalization data per RIDOH’s own recording on 4/27/20, and 5/3/20, throughout the period since 4/27/20, till 9/15/23:
  - a) Between all those on the roster of “modelers” per 1) above
  - b) Between the modelers, and RIDOH Director Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, and her successors, Dr. James McDonald, and Dr. Uptala Bandy
  - c) Between the modelers, Governor Raimondo, and subsequently, Governor McKee, either directly, or via RIDOH Directors Drs. Alexander-Scott, McDonald, and Bandy

Sincerely,

Andrew Bostom, MD, MS  
Retired Associate Professor of Medicine and Family Medicine  
The Warren Alpert Brown University School of Medicine  
Cellphone: 401-447-7217