

April 14, 2026

The Honorable Joseph J. Solomon, jr. Chair  
House Corporations Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for H8137- The Protect Our Healthcare Act**

Dear Chair Solomon, Vice Chairs O'Brien and Caldwell, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF), we respectfully submit this testimony in support of **H8137** commonly referred to as the Protect Our Healthcare Act and we commend Chair Donovan and her co-sponsors for their leadership in proposing this legislation..

RICCF is a statewide coalition of 44 children's behavioral health providers, advocates, and family-serving organizations committed to ensuring the wellbeing of all Rhode Island children and families. Access to stable health insurance coverage is a foundational requirement for meeting a families' physical, developmental, and behavioral health needs.

Rhode Island has made important progress in reducing the uninsured rate, but recent and anticipated federal policy changes will reverse these gains. Loss of coverage for 53,000 Rhode Islanders puts not only individual children and families at risk, but threatens the stability of the entire healthcare system by doubling the uninsured rate and the fiscal pressures on healthcare providers across the spectrum. Without affordable coverage, families are more likely to delay care until conditions escalate, placing additional strain on emergency departments, schools, and community-based providers.

Loss of coverage results in delayed access to preventive care, interruptions in behavioral health treatment, and increased reliance on emergency and crisis systems. Maintaining continuous, affordable coverage is therefore not only a health insurance and healthcare system issue, but a child and family wellbeing issue.


We also emphasize that coverage stability is essential to the effectiveness of Rhode Island's broader health and behavioral health system investments.

We support the inclusion of structured stakeholder engagement in the implementation of affordability policies. We request that the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families be represented on the advisory board to bring a child welfare and children's behavioral health perspective to the discussions. The voice of providers and those with lived experience have important knowledge to inform affordability thresholds, eligibility design, and program adjustments over time.

RICCF respectfully urges your support for H8137- the Protect our Healthcare Act. Creating a Rhode Island healthcare program for the uninsured is critical to ensuring children's health, stabilizing families, and stabilizing

We appreciate the Committee's leadership and consideration of this important legislation and we thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tanja Kubas Meyer".

Tanja Kubas Meyer  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families