

May 14, 2024

Re: In Support of H7591 – An Act Relating to Public Finance – Medical Assistance and Public Assistance Caseload Estimating Conferences

Dear Chairman Abney, Vice Chairs Slater and Marszalkowski, and members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 7591 and to advocate for the full adoption of the Medicaid rates proposed by the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) for FY'25.

RICCF has strongly supported the recent review of Medicaid rates by OHIC, and we fully endorse adopting the rates proposed by OHIC for FY'25. Adoption of Medicaid rate increases is one of the solutions to rebuilding the state's home and community-based system that Rhode Island needs to serve its children in the least restrictive environments. We appreciate the Governor's efforts to increase Medicaid rates in the budget, but we must highlight that implementing only 1/3 of the proposed rates further weakens an already fragile care system.

Medicaid rates for individual services set the foundation for our entire healthcare system and determine the income healthcare providers receive for delivering care to Medicaid beneficiaries. As of June 2023, 369,652 Rhode Islanders were enrolled in Medicaid, 24% of the state's population.¹ Insufficient reimbursement rates particularly impact children, with more than two in five children in Rhode Island relying on Medicaid for their healthcare coverage.

Adequate Medicaid rates are essential for the sustainability of our member organizations, which provide vital family and children's services across Rhode Island and continue to face significant inflationary pressures. These pressures pose a serious challenge to their ability to continue offering high-quality care to the most vulnerable children and families in our state.

Without fair reimbursement, these community organizations struggle to keep programs operational and provide the care that countless children and families rely on. Medicaid

¹ <https://files.kff.org/attachment/fact-sheet-medicaid-state-RI>

rate adjustments must be made promptly to ensure these providers can maintain their financial stability while continuing to deliver essential services,

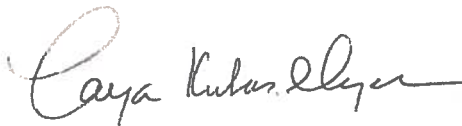
House Bill 7591 is critically important in addressing this challenge. By requiring regular updates on forecasted costs and incorporating recommended rates into the budget submission process, this legislation would promote greater predictability, stability, and sustainability in funding programs that support vulnerable populations.

We also urge you to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) rates in caseload estimating and future rate reviews. By integrating DCYF rates into these estimations and reviews, the state can gain a more holistic understanding of the financial needs and demands of child welfare services and ensure adequate resources are allocated to support vulnerable children and families under DCYF's care.

We strongly urge you to include DCYF rates in caseload estimating and future rate reviews in House Bill 7591 and prioritize the health and stability of our children and families by adopting the full Medicaid rates proposed by OHIC for FY'25.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tanja Kubas-Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tanja Kubas-Meyer
Executive Director