

February 28, 2024

To: Chairman Abney and Committee Members of the House Finance

From: Beth Bixby, MSW, LICSW, CEO Tides Family Services

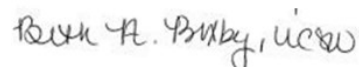
As the CEO of Tides Family Services, I respectfully submit the following written testimony:

I am writing to you today regarding Section 5 (c) related to Provider Reimbursement Rates as outlined in **House Bill 7225 Article 9, Relating to Health and Human Services**. Tides Family Services appreciates the work conducted thus far by OHIC and commends the Governor's administration on a solid foundation established by OHIC's rate review for much-needed future investments. TFS stands ready to assist OHIC with its next phase of work surrounding rate reform/review, specifically, as it relates to children's services currently procured by DCYF which are not included in this report.

It is our recommendation that all the rates reviewed be funded at 100% of OHIC's recommendation, including MCO rates. The findings of this report shed light on the critical importance of ensuring adequate funding to support these essential services, many of which have been significantly underfunded for decades and are serving individuals and families with needs that have become more acute over time. Phased increases create the risk for disparities in individuals being able to access appropriate services when they are needed most leading to worse outcomes and a reliance on more costly interventions.

The state's investment in our services results in not only better care/support for kids and families, but also translates to a stronger economy in RI. We estimate that there are approximately 1,000 workers in Rhode Island providing direct care and services who are positively impacted when investments are made into the services they deliver. Higher wages/salaries help our organizations to provide more competitive wages that allow our workforce to become homeowners, increase their purchasing power, and increase their own financial stability.

Respectfully submitted,



Beth A. Bixby, MSW, LICSW
CEO, Tides Family Services