



TIDES FAMILY SERVICES

WE NEVER GIVE UP ON A KID... NEVER!

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April 24, 2024

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chairman, House Finance Committee
Room 35
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: H7225- OHIC Article 1&9

Chairman Abney and Committee Members:

I am writing to you today regarding the Governor's FY2025 recommended budget amendment for the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner Rate Review Schedule. Tides Family Services provides critical community-based child welfare, juvenile justice, and behavioral health programs for children and families throughout the state. We bring a broad perspective to this committee based on over 40 years of providing services to children and families in Rhode Island.

In September 2023, OHIC released a report and recommendations covering a wide range of services, however, noticeably absent from this review was any DCYF contracted service. OHIC cited in its report that the omission of these services from its rate review and subsequent recommendations was related to the fact that at the time of the report, DCYF was engaged in an ongoing procurement process. While we understand this, we also would like to stress the importance of rate setting in the context of the DCYF service array and would argue that the current competitive bid process is ineffective as it has not yet been completed. We are hopeful that OHIC will complete the task assigned to it by the General Assembly and include DCYF contracted services in a second phase of rate review efforts so that it may offer recommendations to EOHHS for its consideration.

It is important to note that DCYF has statutory authority over child welfare, juvenile justice and children's behavioral health for all Rhode Island children. There is ambiguity regarding the delineation of children's services within the report and budget presentations. This ambiguity becomes more pronounced when considering the broader populations encompassed within the border context of social and human services. To ensure representation, incorporating language that explicitly acknowledges relevant populations and services delivery is imperative.



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Proposed Amendment to Governor's Amendment #8 (found on page 22)

(1) "Behavioral health services" means mental health and substance use disorder services including, but not limited to, outpatient, home and community-based services, residential, and mobile services.

(2) "Children's services" means services for children and families that include, but are not limited to, prevention, behavioral health services, home-based therapeutic services, early intervention services, residential services, child welfare services, community-based juvenile justice services, and intellectual and developmental disability services.

Sincerely,

Beth A. Bixby, LICSW

Beth Bixby, MSW, LICSW
CEO, Tides Family Services