



4/24/24

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7225 - Governor's Budget Amendments #8 and #10 - OHIC Rate Review Schedule

Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Governor's Budget Amendments #8 and #10 regarding the OHIC Rate Review Schedule. We thank the Governor and General Assembly for identifying this need through the 2022 legislation, and supporting OHIC in the rate review process. We also thank OHIC for all of their work, and producing their findings on schedule.

We are concerned, however, that the four-year cycle proposed in these amendments is too long. If the four-year cycle is approved, we ask that providers receive annual intervening inflation adjustments using the Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index (PCE) excluding food and energy (the inflation adjuster used by OHIC in its review).

My name is Margaret Holland McDuff, and I am CEO of Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI). FSRI is a health and human service organization with the mission "to advance equity, hope, and opportunity in our communities." FSRI is a provider of many services that were included in this review, including Early Intervention, First Connections, outpatient mental health counseling, HIV prevention and education, and more. FSRI was involved and supportive of the rate review legislation that was passed in 2022, and I subsequently served on the OHIC Advisory Committee during this rate review recommendation process.

As we know, the pandemic exacerbated a workforce crisis that was already underway for health and human service organizations. Waitlists for services, inadequate staffing, and high caseloads are still a reality for our sector. If we do not intentionally and thoughtfully invest in these services, we will be unable to meet the needs of Rhode Islanders at appropriate levels of care and will stress (our already stressed) higher levels of care through increased hospitalizations and more costly services.

Again, we thank the Governor and General Assembly for your support of the rate process, and working to implement increases for human service programming in the face of a tight budget. However, **four-years is too long unless providers receive annual intervening inflation adjustments using the PCE Index.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these amendments. Please feel free to contact me with any questions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Holland McDuff', written in a cursive style.

Margaret Holland McDuff, CEO