

Testimony in Support of *H 7204*  
An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government -- The Healthcare  
Services Funding Plan Act  
House Committee on Finance  
May 1, 2024  
Divya Nair, Policy Analyst, Economic Progress Institute

**The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Shallcross Smith's H 7204,** which would sustain the MomsPRN and PediPRN consultation programs. These programs help perinatal and pediatric care providers effectively manage maternal and pediatric mental health challenges through telehealth consultations and referrals.

Rhode Island has two statewide Psychiatry Resource Network (PRN) teleconsultation programs: RI MomsPRN and PediPRN. These programs support Rhode Island healthcare professionals by offering same-day specialized clinical consultations and resource/referral services related to mental health.<sup>1</sup> In Rhode Island, one in three women in Rhode Island report experiencing depression throughout or after their pregnancy. And one in four children, ranging from ages 4 –17, have a diagnosable mental health condition. Post-partum depression has been proven to be deadly for new parents and for their young children and families if left untreated. Rhode Island, Washington, and Newport County have been highlighted as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (MHPSAs).<sup>2</sup> These programs have supported almost 4,000 patients as of 2023.

MomsPRN and PediPRN help Rhode Islanders through increasing access to mental health care during a shortage of care providers and long waiting lists. We urge passage.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://health.ri.gov/publications/resourceguides/PRN\\_ProgramOverviewBrief.pdf](https://health.ri.gov/publications/resourceguides/PRN_ProgramOverviewBrief.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/charts/7?state=RI>