

Testimony in Support of HB-5461
An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government -- The Healthcare
Services Funding Plan Act
House Committee on Finance
April 30, 2025
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The Economic Progress Institute supports Representative Shallcross Smith's HB-5461, 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.¹ 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).² These programs have supported more than 5,000 patients as of 2024.³ The cost of untreated maternal mental health issues such as emergency department visits, delayed treatment, or other societal impacts is estimated to be around \$9.7 million annually in Rhode Island.⁴

MomsPRN and PediPRN are investments that can prevent further harm and additional costs to the state, while helping Rhode Islanders through increasing access to mental health care during a shortage of care providers and long waiting lists. We urge passage.

¹ [PRN Program Overview Brief, 2024](#)

² [Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, by County, April 2025 - Rhode Island](#)

³ Rhode Island Psychiatry Resource Network (PRN) Program Overview Brief, 2024

⁴ Sustain What Works: RI MomsPRN is a Vital Resource for Maternal Mental Health in Rhode Island, 2024