

April 30, 2025

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Committee on Finance
RI Senate
By Email To: HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov

Re: **In support of H-5461**

Dear Chair Abney:

We write in support of Representative Shallcross Smith's bill, H-5461, to sustain Rhode Island's Psychiatry Resources Network for postpartum mothers (MomsPRN) and children (PediPRN).

In our work with families, we hear regularly about the state's lack of sufficient numbers of mental health providers, especially for children with Medicaid. Too many families are unable to find providers who can see their children in a timely manner. As a result, pediatricians are often asked to pinch hit and help families navigate mental health challenges. All too frequently, new and expecting moms are struggling with changes, both in themselves and their families. When a child is born with special needs, these struggles become even more significant, requiring support from their providers.

The Psychiatry Resource Networks have supported over 1,200 healthcare professionals – working with over 2,550 children and moms each, helping their patients manage in the absence of direct access to mental health professionals. The innovative programs empower pediatricians and obstetricians by building competency and increasing patient access to mental health care by offering frontline clinicians same day specialized clinical teleconsultations that include resource/referral support and ongoing professional education.

As the state works to encourage more mental health professionals to enter the profession and stay in the state, PediPRN and MomsPRN are critical supports that the state should continue to fund.

We thank Representative Shallcross Smith for introducing this legislation and we hope to continue to work with this Committee to support ongoing efforts to improve access to maternal and children's behavioral health services.

Sincerely,

/s/

Samuel Salganik, JD
Executive Director
Salganik@ripin.org

