



Facing Hereditary Cancer EMPOWERED

April 28, 2025

Re: **Proponent HB 5771**

Dear Chairman Abney, Vice Chairman Slater, Vice Chairman Marszalkowski and Esteemed Members of the House Finance Committee,

On behalf of FORCE (Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered), a national nonprofit organization that represents families facing hereditary cancers, and our Rhode Island constituents, I am writing to express strong support for HB 5771. This bill would facilitate fertility services for Medical Assistance (MA) individuals in Rhode Island, including those dealing with a medical diagnosis or treatment that may impair their ability to have children.

Patients dealing with a frightening diagnosis—who are about to begin lifesaving, but potentially sterilizing treatments—have to make urgent, difficult decisions about their future hopes of becoming a parent. Similarly, women with an inherited genetic mutation predisposing them to ovarian cancer are advised to undergo surgery to remove their ovaries and fallopian tubes to avoid this deadly disease. For these individuals, fertility preservation is the only means available to protect their reproductive capability and may be the only viable option to build a biological family. Without MA coverage for fertility services, patients cannot afford these procedures and fees and will face permanent, involuntary infertility.

Fortunately, this legislation would give some Rhode Island state residents options for those confronting this dilemma, by ensuring that they have insurance coverage for effective, evidence-based options for preserving their fertility before their surgery or initiation of cancer therapy and pursuing future interventions to realize their dream of having children. These services are consistent with national guidelines issued by leading medical associations, including the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM).

FORCE has a strong presence throughout Rhode Island. Members of our community facing cancer are desperate for a glimmer of hope to help them preserve the option of having children. **We respectfully urge you to help patients facing infertility by supporting HB 5771.**

Thank you for your consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Peabody
Advocacy Manager
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