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To: House Finance Committee  
From: Karen Malcolm, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition, [ProtectRIHealth@gmail.com](mailto:ProtectRIHealth@gmail.com)  
Date: April 30, 2025  
Re: **SUPPORT H5988** – Pediatric Rate Increase

The Protect Our Healthcare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a goal to protect, improve, and expand equitable access to quality, person-centered, affordable health care for all. The Coalition House Bill 5988, to increase the pediatric Medicaid payment rates to improve the capacity of Rhode Island's pediatricians to provide quality care for babies and children.

Primary care, and especially pediatric care, is in crisis as demonstrated most recently with the closing of Anchor Medical. The current shortage of pediatric health care professionals has been documented [nationally](#) and [in Rhode Island](#). As with the broader crisis in primary care, it is expected to worsen and is affecting families of all income levels.

Physicians are aging out, retiring early, or cutting back their hours. Those who remain have seen their patient rosters swell. Administrative burden, combined with decades of low reimbursement and under-investment continues to exacerbate the crisis. For too many Rhode Islanders, a health insurance card in their pocket doesn't mean a thing if they can't access the care they need when they need it.

In SFY 2023, Medicaid provided comprehensive health insurance to 183,193 children, parents, and pregnant women through the RIte Care program. That same year, 4,112 (44%) of babies born in Rhode Island had Medicaid/RIte Care insurance.<sup>1</sup> Medicaid is critical to supporting the system we all rely on, therefore, increasing Medicaid rates for pediatric care will help improve access to care for every child in Rhode Island.

H5988 is one step in addressing the much broader crises in primary care needing immediate action. We urge your support!

Thank you.

**Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include:** Economic Progress Institute, RIPIN, Mental Health Association RI, RI Health Center Association, Latino Policy Institute, Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone (CPO-HEZ), United Way of Rhode Island, Senior Agenda Coalition RI, RI Medical Society, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Leukemia/Lymphoma Society, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, RI Community Food Bank, RI Psychological Association, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), National Association of Social Workers RI Chapter, The Womxn Project, Advocates for Better Care

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<sup>1</sup> EOHHS SFY 2023 Medicaid Expenditure Report: <https://eohhs.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur226/files/2024-09/FY%202023%20-%20RI%20Medicaid%20Expenditure%20Report%20FINAL%20%281%29.pdf>