

May 20, 2025

House Finance Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
State House
Providence, RI

RE: Support for H5527- Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) for Children and Youth

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Colin O., and I am the parent of XX, age 10. I am writing today to share my family's experience with the Tides Program, and in support of their critically important work.

My son was the victim of a traumatic bullying event at his school. While he did his best to heal from and move past the incident with our help and that of his school community, he found himself on a worrying decline into anxiety and depression. This progressed to the point that his school became concerned his thoughts were turning toward self-harm. The Tides Program was one of the support organizations we were directed to in the immediate aftermath of this moment of crisis for him and our family.

The Tides Program arrived in our lives in a moment of great uncertainty, need, panic, and sadness. They responded to our call and were working with us in our home within hours of reaching out to them. Mobile Crisis Clinicians worked with both us and our child to help unpack and understand the emotions and behaviors, and start to identify their possible causes. They were sensitive, considerate, and gentle. They provided insight and guidance. They gave us hope at a moment when hope was hard to see amidst the crisis we were in. Their support in the immediate aftermath of this crisis prepared us for the journey ahead to work on the underlying causes of our child's powerful emotions and responses to the trauma he had experienced. The Tides Program provided an excellent foundation for continued work to understand, validate, and work toward addressing what my son was going through. Our family has continued to do this work with a network of supportive organizations and providers, and the Tides Program set us up for success in this journey.

I am so very thankful for programs like the Tides Program. In a true family crisis, it is incredibly challenging to know what to do, where to turn, how to respond—as we ourselves navigated the challenging emotions of the situation, we were so grateful to have a partner like the Tides Program and their incredibly talented, caring staff as partners to help us. I am a strong advocate for the work of the Tides Program.

Sincerely,

Colin O'Hara