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RI Relay for Hearing Impaired 800.745.5555

ThriveBHRI.org

Representative Marvin Abney, Chairman
House Finance Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

May 20, 2025

Dear Representative Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

Please accept this testimony that I am submitting on behalf of Thrive Behavioral Health, a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) and a leading provider of children's behavioral health services in Rhode Island. Thrive strongly supports House Bill H5527, which would require Medicaid to establish Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) as a Medicaid program through a State Plan Amendment.

MRSS is a critical, evidence-based intervention that provides immediate, in-person behavioral health support to children and youth in crisis, with the goal of de-escalating the situation and avoiding hospitalization or deeper system involvement. RI's MRSS providers have proven to be effective by diverting over 90% of youth from psychiatric hospitalization and saving the state approximately \$2.2 million by avoiding emergency department visits.

Despite the importance, there are currently limited methods in Rhode Island for providers to be reimbursed by insurers for delivering MRSS. As a result, CCBHCs like Thrive are being required to fund the entire youth mobile crisis response system statewide at a loss of \$15,000 per month. The current funding system forces MRSS providers to be reimbursed only through CCBHCs, which limits who is able to receive MRSS services. This is not only unsustainable, but also inequitable.

This bill is a simple but vital fix. MRSS should be part of the RI State Plan and be reimbursable by Medicaid just like any other behavioral health service. Establishing MRSS as a Medicaid reimbursable service will bring parity, sustainability, and equity to our behavioral health crisis system. Rhode Island's youth deserve timely, professional mental health intervention, no matter who insures them. Without adequate funding from all payers, this system is at risk of collapsing, placing greater strain on emergency departments, schools, law enforcement, and families.



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We urge you to pass House Bill H5527 and ensure that ALL youth in Rhode Island have access to lifesaving mobile crisis care, stabilization and family support, regardless of their enrollment in a CCBHC or insurance coverage.

Thank you for your time and commitment to children's mental health.

Respectfully,

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