



5/22/2025

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney  
Chair, House Finance Committee  
State of Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

**Re: H6128**

Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee

I am writing to express concerns regarding the current structure of bill H6128 regarding the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. While FSRI fully supports the original intent of the legislation to provide sustainable funding for the 988 call center, which is a critical part of our state's behavioral health crisis response system, the legislation as currently written is too expansive and includes other policy and authority changes not necessary to accomplish the funding.

FSRI is a behavioral health and social service organization that has been serving Rhode Islanders for decades, including programming to support healthy child development, provide essential behavioral health services, and coordinate crisis intervention programs that help children and families thrive. FSRI is also one of Rhode Island's eight Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) and a provider, since October 2022, of Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization (MRSS) services.

In particular, we have three concerns with the legislation as written that we are hoping can be addressed, while still meeting the need for a sustainable funding source for 988:

1. The legislation gives expansive authority to BHDDH including crisis intervention services. It should be authority to operate a 988 call center in compliance with the federal definition noted. The current language is too expansive as it could be defined as authority over designing a larger crisis system and could actually violate procurement regulations.
2. This legislation does not include DCYF, which has the statutory authority for children's mental health, and requires their involvement.
3. There is no mention of MRSS as the state chosen model of delivering child and youth mobile crisis services, even with the widely recognized results (so far, under the model, over 90% of Rhode Island children and youth referred to MRSS have been deferred from emergency departments and more restrictive, higher levels of care).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **H6128**. Again, we support funding in some manner for the 988 call center, but urge consideration of the above three concerns.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Margaret Holland McDuff', is written over a light blue background.

Margaret Holland McDuff  
CEO