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Good afternoon Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance committee,

My name is Dayna Gladstein, I am the president and CEO of Newport Mental Health, and I am testifying in support of HB7127, specifically Article 10: Health and Human Services. Funding services like the 988 Crisis Line is critical to maintaining the network of care across Rhode Island and keeping community members safe.

Since the establishment of the 988 Crisis Line in Rhode Island, our in-state answer rate for crisis calls rose from about 15 percent to 99 percent, the best call answer rate in the country. That makes a difference in terms of helping people in need. This exceptional call answer rate and the increased access to behavioral health care through the RI Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) not only demonstrates the states commitment to timely crisis response but also builds trust and a sense of safety for Rhode Islanders, a sense that is paramount in the wake of so many violent tragedies affecting our communities.

As our communities continue to heal from tragedies like the incidents at Brown University and at the Dennis M. Lynch Arena in Pawtucket, it is more important than ever to provide accessible resources to talk about mental health and connect people to our mental and behavioral health providers.

Stable funding for programs that create the state's behavioral health safety net like 988 and CCBHC's are proven to lower unnecessary hospitalizations and ED use while keeping children, youth, families, and adults in their communities while recovery takes place.

Funding the 988 Crisis line to level is just the first step in reaffirming our commitment to the wellbeing of Rhode Islanders. Making sure this federal mandate remains funded year after year is the next crucial step to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the Ocean State. Our organization, along with Horizon Healthcare Partners, remains hopeful that legislators will continue to support services like 988 and CCBHC's as the foundation for a critical network of mental and behavioral health care in Rhode Island for years to come.

Again, thank you for showing your continued support for the 988 Crisis line by fully funding it for FY27, and I urge your support for Article 10.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna Gladstein,

LICSW President & CEO



Newport Mental Health