



March 23, 2026

The Honorable Teresa Tanzi  
Chair, Subcommittee on Human Services  
House Committee on Finance  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H7127, Governor's FY 2027, FY 2026 Revised and Capital Budgets, Department of Health

Dear Chairwoman Tanzi and Members of the Human Services Subcommittee:

My name is Marie Palumbo-Hayes, LICSW the Chief of Community Health at Family Service of Rhode Island a health and human service organization with the mission “to advance opportunity and hope in our communities.” In my role, I oversee a variety of programs, which includes early childhood family visiting services under contract with RIDOH: First Connections and Healthy Families America (HFA).

I write today to urge you to ensure that Rhode Island meets the state funding matching requirements for the federal Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) funds in order to be able to draw down all allowable federal funds so that high-quality home visiting programs such as HFA are offered to all families who could benefit.

HFA is an evidence-based, long term home visiting program that is designed to support families who may have experienced trauma, are facing challenges or stressors, or other adverse experiences in their lives. HFA serves prenatal women and families with infants up to the age of 5 years old. HFA is the signature program of Prevent Child Abuse America, and is designed to provide support to our vulnerable families.

I would like to thank Governor McKee for getting the human service departments and RIDE together to invest over \$400,000 for the match. Now we need to close the gap. For FY27, I urge Rhode Island to make the \$537,000 investment in general funds required to receive the \$1.6 million match to help fund Early Childhood home visiting programs and that money is allocated directly to fund the HFA and First Connections program, both of which are vital to the health and wellbeing of babies, children and their families.

Sincerely,

Marie Palumbo-Hayes, LICSW  
Chief of Community Health  
Family Service of Rhode Island