



Testimony Re: Rhode Island Department of Health FY 2027, FY 2026 Revised Budgets

March 19, 2026

Dear Chair Tanzi & Members of the Subcommittee on Human Services of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Rhode Island Department of Health's FY 2027 and FY 2026 agency budgets. As a Family Physician who works in both in primary care and inpatient with mothers and babies, I appreciate the leadership the Rhode Island General Assembly took last year to provide funding through RIDOH's budget to sustain RI MomsPRN as its federal funding ended, and I support the Governor's FY 2027 proposal to continue this investment. RI MomsPRN has become an important resource for clinicians like me caring for pregnant and postpartum patients by expanding access to timely mental health consultation and professional education. I also encourage similar funding support for PediPRN as its federal funding concludes.

Successful Clinical Partnership with RI MomsPRN

For the past several years, my practice has closely collaborated with the RI MomsPRN clinical team at the Center for Women's Behavioral Health at Women & Infants Hospital. Through participation in intensive practice learning collaboratives, we strengthened our screening, treatment, and referral workflows for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder among pregnant and postpartum patients and deepened our connections to community-based services and supports, improving care coordination for the families we serve.

We also are training the next generation of primary care doctors at our clinic in the Brown Family Medicine Residency, and access to RI MomsPRN professional education opportunities has been invaluable in ensuring family-centered and evidence-based training around maternal mental health.

Our team also regularly uses the RI MomsPRN teleconsultation line, which provides patient-specific clinical guidance along with resource and referral support. Together, these services and clinical support have helped us better identify and address maternal mental health concerns and respond more quickly to patients' needs.

Why Sustaining RI MomsPRN Matters

Addressing maternal mental health is essential to the health and well-being of patients and families, as timely identification and treatment can prevent more serious complications and improve outcomes during pregnancy and after birth. As a member of the RI Perinatal Death Review Committee, I have reviewed several heartbreaking cases in the past several years.





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The top preventable causes of maternal death in the perinatal and postpartum period in Rhode Island are mental health and substance use disorder. This should be a “never” occurrence in our state. RI MomsPRN makes behavioral health collaboration possible in busy clinical settings by strengthening provider capacity, improving care coordination, and helping practices navigate limited specialty resources.

Continued General Assembly support for statewide Psychiatry Resource Network services, including RI MomsPRN and PediPRN, is critical. These programs empower frontline clinicians, help prevent costly downstream health outcomes, and ensure pregnant and postpartum women and children receive timely, evidence-based mental health care when it matters most. For these reasons, I respectfully urge continued appropriation within RIDOH’s state agency budget, along with the passage of related legislation, to sustain both programs.

MomsPRN is a lifeline for our state’s at-risk families, and it must be a top priority of our state to ensure health generations to come by sustaining this program.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Sutter, MD, FAAFP, IBCLC
Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Addiction Medicine
Family Medicine Obstetrics Academic Director
Brown Family Medicine Residency



(401) 921-7981



111 Brewster Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860



familymedicine.med.brown.edu