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March 24, 2026

The Honorable Teresa Tanzi
Chair, House Finance Subcommittee on Human Services
State of Rhode Island General Assembly

RE: Testimony on FY 2027 Budget – H-7127 (RI Department of Health)

Dear Chair Tanzi and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Child & Family to respectfully oppose the proposed FY 2027 budget for the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) as outlined in H-7127.

Child & Family's mission is to strengthen individuals, families, and the communities in which they live by identifying needs and utilizing best practices. As one of Rhode Island's oldest and most comprehensive human service organizations, we provide a wide range of programs spanning early childhood, behavioral health, education, family support, and services for older adults. Each year, we serve thousands of Rhode Islanders through evidence-based, trauma-informed programs designed to promote stability, well-being, and long-term success across the lifespan.

While we appreciate the Administration's continued focus on maternal and child health, the proposed budget omits two critical investments that are essential to ensuring Rhode Island's youngest children get off to a strong start.

First, **the budget does not include \$535,000 in state general revenue needed to draw down approximately \$1.6 million in available federal funding** for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. Rhode Island has already forfeited significant federal funds due to the lack of a state match. Without this investment, providers will continue to struggle to maintain staffing, and fewer families with infants and young children will be able to access these proven, evidence-based services.

Second, **the budget does not include funding to sustain the Pediatric Psychiatry Resource Network (PediPRN)**. This critical program provides real-time consultation to pediatric providers, enabling them to meet children's behavioral

health needs without long delays for specialty care. In a state where too many young children experience mental health challenges, eliminating PediPRN would create significant gaps in care for families and providers alike.

At Child & Family, we see firsthand the impact of these services. Home visiting strengthens parent-child relationships, improves health outcomes, and builds family stability. PediPRN ensures that children receive timely mental health support in trusted primary care settings. Both are essential components of a responsive and effective early childhood system.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to amend the FY 2027 RIDOH budget to:

- Include \$535,000 in state general revenue to secure federal MIECHV funding; and
- Allocate funding to sustain the PediPRN program beyond September.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to Rhode Island's children and families.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Jacobsen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "J".

Susan Jacobsen, LMHC
Chief Executive Officer
Child & Family Rhode Island