

March 24, 2026

The Honorable Teresa Tanzi
Chair, House Finance Committee
Subcommittee on Human Services
By Email To: HouseFinance@RiLegislature.gov

Re: Governor's FY 2027 Department of Health Budget

Dear Chair Tanzi and members of the Committee:

We write in strong support of the Governor's proposed budget including funding for RI MomsPRN. We are concerned, however, that there is no funding allocated for PediPRN. Senate Bill 2562 and House Bill 8268 would help to sustain Rhode Island's Psychiatry Resources Network for moms (MomsPRN) and children (PediPRN).

In our work with families, we hear regularly about the state's lack of sufficient numbers of mental health providers, especially for children with Medicaid. Too many families are unable to find providers who can see their children in a timely manner. As a result, pediatricians are often asked to pinch hit and help families navigate mental health challenges. All too frequently, new and expecting moms are struggling with changes, both in themselves and their families. When a child is born with special needs, these struggles become even more significant, requiring support from their providers.

The Psychiatry Resource Networks have supported over 1,300 healthcare professionals – working with nearly 6,000 children and moms, helping their patients manage in the absence of direct access to mental health professionals. The innovative programs empower pediatricians and obstetricians by building competency and increasing patient access to mental health care by offering frontline clinicians same day specialized clinical teleconsultations that include resource/referral support and ongoing professional education.

As the state works to encourage more mental health professionals to enter the profession and stay in the state, PediPRN and MomsPRN are critical supports that the state should continue to fund.

We thank Senator DiMario and Representative Shallcross Smith for introducing this legislation and we hope to continue to work with this Committee to support ongoing efforts to improve access to maternal and children's behavioral health services.

Sincerely,

/s/

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