



March 25, 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 Budget, Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Dear Chairwoman Tanzi and Members of the Human Services Subcommittee:

I am writing to support the OHIC-recommended rate increases included in the Governor's SFY 2027 budget, and to request that the full rate increases be implemented in SFY 2027 instead of 50% in SFY 2027 and 50 % in SFY 2028.

My name is Fiona Nicholson and I am the Program Director for the Healthy Families America (HFA) program at Family Service of Rhode Island. 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. In 2025 FSRI HFA program served 198 families with 3,440 visits; 95% were low-income families.

HFA offers support to new parents navigating the joys and struggles of parenthood. HFA provides services for prenatal moms, supports bonding and attachment with newborns, offers child development information and activities, and makes referrals to community resources. It also promotes safe sleep for infants to reduce risk of SIDS. HFA's approach is strength-based, culturally respectful, and family-centered. HFA children show enhanced cognitive development and have fewer behavior problems. HFA parents are more confident in their parenting role and build a strong lifelong bond with their child. We see the difference we make in the lives of families every day.

We strongly support the recommended rate increases and respectfully urge consideration of accelerating their full implementation within SFY 2027. Doing so will better ensure that these high-quality programs can continue to be offered to all families who could benefit.

Sincerely,

Fiona Nicholson

Fiona Nicholson
HFA Director, Family Service of Rhode Island