

Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Finance Committee

From: Meredith Lemek

Date May 5, 2026

Re: Support, House Bill 8175 Requiring Medicaid Coverage of Certified Lactation Counselors

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Meredith Lemek and I'm writing in strong support of 8175 Bill. Thank you to House Representatives Stewart, Tanzi, Voas, Giraldo, Furtado, Alzate, Cruz, Casimiro, Edwards, and Diaz for co-sponsoring.

As a birth worker for many years, I have seen first hand the incredible need for lactation support. Many families do not have the lactation support they need and are unable to continue providing breast milk. CLC's provide knowledge and strategies for successful breastfeeding, much of this knowledge that typical providers lack or do not have time to go over during appointments. If CLC's are covered by medicaid, this will provide families with time devoted to lactation support. Something so important for growing infants that many people do not have access to. With all the data proving the benefits of breast milk and breastfeeding, I believe it is imperative that this bill be passed. This would provide the support so many families need to provide/ continue to provide breast milk to their babies.

I urge you to strongly support the passage of House Bill 8175 to ensure that all families have access to lactation and feeding support.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Meredith