



J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center

"Promoting an enhanced quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities."

May 5, 2026

Dear Chair Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Albert Vario. I reside at 39 Overlook Lane in Chepachet, Rhode Island, and I serve as President and CEO of the J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center in Warwick. I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 8183, which would require that the FY2027 state budget include an additional \$117.6 million to fully fund disability services at the level recommended by the Rhode Island Health Insurance Commissioner.

From a fiscal perspective, community-based services for children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities represent one of the state's most effective cost-management tools. These services—including early intervention, home-based supports, residential care, and day and employment programs—prevent higher-cost utilization of emergency departments, hospital systems, and institutional settings. Adequate funding enables services to operate at increased capacity and produces greater budget predictability year after year.

While Governor McKee's FY2027 budget proposal appropriately acknowledges the need for additional investment, the proposed increase represents only half of the funding level deemed necessary by the Health Insurance Commissioner. The remaining gap presents a financial risk. Underfunded reimbursement rates contribute directly to workforce shortages, reduced service availability, and increased service interruptions—conditions that consistently drive higher downstream spending and unstable budget variances.

Recent investments in the care system have helped slow workforce attrition and mitigate some system pressures. However, current funding levels remain calibrated to minimum operability rather than sustainability. As operating costs continue to rise due to inflation and healthcare market pressures, providers are increasingly constrained in their ability to plan responsibly, retain staff, and prevent service destabilization.

For the House Finance Committee, fully funding disability services at the recommended level should be viewed as a prudent fiscal strategy. Predictable investment reduces reliance on crisis-driven appropriations, limits exposure to unbudgeted emergency costs, and stabilizes one of the state's largest human services systems. In effect, it protects the state against more volatile and expensive failures in care delivery.



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I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 8183 and include the full \$117.6 million adjustment in the FY2027 budget to ensure both service continuity and sound fiscal management.

Thank you for your leadership and careful consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Vario", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Albert Vario
President & CEO
J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center