

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of H8417, which would provide temporary funding to help keep Hillsgrove House open during its current Medicaid funding crisis.

Hillsgrove House is the only Clubhouse in Rhode Island and provides essential services, community, and support for people living with mental health conditions. Clubhouses are an evidence based and proven model that helps people build relationships, return to work and school, reduce isolation, and remain connected to their communities.

I am especially concerned that a technical Medicaid issue could put Rhode Island's only Clubhouse at risk of closure. The people who rely on Hillsgrove House should not lose access to this critical resource while the funding issue is being resolved.

Hillsgrove House is led by Mark Maragnano, a respected longtime Clubhouse leader who previously served as Director of Potter Place in Waltham, Massachusetts. His leadership and the Hillsgrove House community deserve support during this urgent time.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support H8417 and provide the temporary funding needed to keep Hillsgrove House open.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Smith

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