



The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI, 02903

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Kelly-Palmer, LICSW, and I serve as the Chief of Behavioral Health at Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI). Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter in support of House Bill H8177, legislation that will strengthen the operational infrastructure necessary to support Rhode Island's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

FSRI is one of Rhode Island's primary providers of Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS), delivering rapid, community-based crisis intervention to children, youth, and families across the state. Through this work, we see firsthand the importance of having a coordinated behavioral health crisis response system that is accessible, responsive, and equipped to connect individuals and families to the appropriate level of care.

The launch of 988 has been a significant step forward in expanding access to behavioral health crisis services. It provides an essential entry point for individuals seeking help during moments of crisis. However, the success of 988 depends not only on the call itself, but on the strength of the operational infrastructure and community-based response systems that support it.

As Rhode Island continues to build out its crisis continuum, investments in operational capacity are critical to ensure that calls are answered promptly, individuals are connected to appropriate services efficiently, and mobile crisis teams and stabilization services can respond effectively in the community.

By investing in the operations behind 988, Rhode Island is investing in earlier intervention, safer communities, reduced strain on emergency systems, and better outcomes for Rhode Islanders.

FSRI supports House Bill H8177 and appreciates the General Assembly's continued commitment to strengthening Rhode Island's behavioral health crisis response system.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kelly-Palmer

Sarah Kelly-Palmer, LICSW
Chief of Behavioral Health