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May 14, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Rhode Island House of Representatives
House Finance Committee

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association letter in support of the Joint Resolution House Bill 7706, which would increase the state appropriation for United Way 211 from \$200,000 to \$500,000. This investment would help sustain and strengthen Rhode Island's 24/7 helpline that connects individuals and families to critical health and human services.

In 2025 alone, 211 responded to nearly 100,000 calls, texts, emails, and in-person inquiries from Rhode Islanders seeking assistance and guidance during times of need. The United Way estimates that every \$1 invested returns approximately \$7.50 in value to the state, driven largely by reduced reliance on costly emergency interventions and faster access to preventive and community-based services.

Increased state appropriation would strengthen 211 at a time when reductions in federal support for health and human services are placing additional strain on vulnerable individuals and families. As demand for assistance continues to grow, 211 remains a critical entry point for Rhode Islanders seeking access to food, housing, medical, dental, and behavioral health services, utility assistance, and other essential community resources. By connecting residents to appropriate services quickly and efficiently, 211 helps stabilize families, reduce barriers to care, and improve coordination across the state's health and human services system.

An increased state investment in the 211 system would help preserve and strengthen Rhode Island's service delivery infrastructure, ensuring that individuals and families can continue to access timely, reliable support when they need it most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager