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Dear Chairman Abney and members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Dayna Gladstein, and I am the President and CEO of Newport Mental Health. I am submitting testimony in support of HB7796 and its companion legislation in the Senate, SB2886. This legislation establishes essential groundwork to diversify Rhode Island's funding sources and ensure that care for our state's youth and families remains sustainable, coordinated, and appropriately resourced.

Rhode Island's children and families rely on a system of care that spans behavioral health, child welfare, education, and community-based support. This bill creates a structured opportunity for the General Assembly and the broader network of care to work together to examine how Rhode Island can maximize federal funding for children's services.

By convening policymakers, agency leaders, and providers with direct experience serving children and families, the commission will be well positioned to identify opportunities to strengthen the financing of prevention, family support, and behavioral health services.

Newport Mental Health would welcome the opportunity to participate in this commission as a community provider with deep expertise in children's behavioral health. In addition to our robust children's programming, our role as a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) gives us unique insight into treating the whole family and understanding the most effective avenues for funding those services. As Rhode Island's first established CCBHC, we are uniquely positioned to support both this legislation and the commission's work upon its passage.

The commission's charge is both timely and necessary. As the state continues implementing Medicaid transformation and certain enhanced federal funding streams expire, it is critical that Rhode Island proactively assess how policy decisions affect children's behavioral health and the systems that support it. A coordinated review will help ensure the state draws down all available federal funds, reduces duplication across agencies, and protects the continuum of care for vulnerable children and families.



Newport Mental Health

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Dayna Gladstein

LICSW, President and CEO



Newport Mental Health