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May 13, 2026

The Honorable Marvin L. Abney
Rhode Island House of Representatives
House Finance Committee
(Submitted via HouseFinance@rilegislature.gov)

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter of support for House Bill 8177, which would provide funding for the state's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

The implementation of the 988-dialing code as the national number for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline represents progress in the effort for accessible mental health support. This easily remembered three-digit number provides a vital lifeline for individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts, emotional distress, or any other behavioral health crisis.

Sustained investment in the 988 program is an important step in strengthening our public mental health infrastructure. With adequate and stable funding, as determined by the legislature, the program can meet growing demand, expand access to crisis care, and reduce the burden on emergency services. By supporting 988, we are committing to a more responsive, equitable, and effective system of care for individuals in mental health crisis.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager