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13 May 2026

The Honorable Chairman Marvin Abney  
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for H8180 – Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)**

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill H8180, which would provide funding for the statewide Children’s Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS) program in Rhode Island. This legislation would provide rapid, community-based behavioral health crisis response services for children and youth experiencing mental health or emotional crises. As a pediatrician in private practice for over 20 years, I can testify this program works and would be a huge loss if allowed to end.

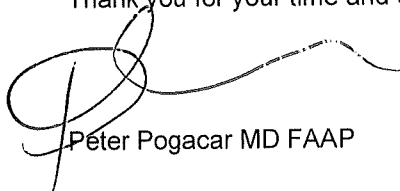
Far too many Rhode Island families struggle to access immediate and appropriate behavioral health support for children in crisis. As a result, families are often left with limited options, including emergency room visits, hospitalization, law enforcement involvement, or out-of-home placement. H8180 offers a more compassionate, effective, and evidence-based alternative by ensuring children can receive timely care in their homes, schools, and communities.

This bill recognizes that early intervention and stabilization services improve outcomes not only for children and families, but also for the healthcare and public safety systems that are currently overwhelmed by preventable behavioral health emergencies. Establishing a statewide MRSS program would help reduce unnecessary emergency department utilization, support continuity of care, and expand equitable access to services regardless of insurance status.

I also appreciate that H8180 promotes a coordinated funding structure using Medicaid, commercial insurance, and state support to create a sustainable long-term model for behavioral health crisis services in Rhode Island. Investing in preventive and community-based care is both fiscally responsible and morally necessary.

Children and families across Rhode Island deserve access to immediate, trauma-informed behavioral health support when they need it most. I respectfully urge you to support and advance H8180.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



Peter Pogacar MD FAAP