



May 14, 2026

Honorable Chairman Marvin Abney
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance
Room 35
State House
Providence, RI 02893

RE: Support H8268

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Beth Bixby, and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of Tides Family Services. I write today in support of H8268 to include both the MomsPRN and PediPRN teleconsultation lines in the healthcare services funding contributions payable by health insurers.

Tides Family Services works every day with Rhode Island's most vulnerable children and families — youth in crisis, youth involved with DCYF, and families who are doing everything they can to keep their children safely at home. We see firsthand what happens when systems work well — and what happens when they do not.

In Rhode Island, PediPRN is currently funded through a combination of state grants, federal support, and philanthropic contributions, and is offered at no cost to providers. While this has enabled the program to grow, the current funding structure is not sustainable long-term and does not fully align with the populations who benefit most—including commercially insured patients.

Including PediPRN in insurer funding contributions is a critical and logical next step for Rhode Island's healthcare system for the following reasons:

1. A Proven, Statewide Model Already Serving Rhode Island Providers

PediPRN is not a pilot—it is an established, statewide program implemented in partnership with Bradley Hospital and supported by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

As of 2023, Rhode Island's Psychiatry Resource Network programs (including PediPRN) have supported:

- Over 1,000 healthcare providers across 339 practices
- More than 5,000 consultation encounters
- Approximately 3,750 children and perinatal patients

This demonstrates both utilization and impact across the state.

2. Addresses Rhode Island's Child Psychiatry Workforce Shortage

Rhode Island, like the rest of the country, faces a shortage of child psychiatrists, leaving many children without timely access to specialty care. PediPRN directly addresses this by supporting pediatricians to manage mild to moderate conditions and appropriately triage complex cases.



3. Maximizes Existing Healthcare Infrastructure

Rather than requiring families to navigate long waitlists or fragmented systems, PediPRN allows care to happen within pediatric primary care practices—where children already receive services. This approach strengthens Rhode Island’s existing healthcare infrastructure and reduces system strain.

4. Promotes Early Intervention and Better Outcomes

By enabling same-day consultation and supporting universal screening, PediPRN helps providers identify and treat behavioral health concerns earlier—before they escalate into crises requiring emergency or inpatient care.

5. Aligns Funding with Benefit Across Payers

Currently, a significant portion of patients supported through these programs are publicly insured; however, children with commercial insurance also benefit from PediPRN services.

Requiring insurer contributions would:

- Create a more equitable funding model
- Ensure shared responsibility across payers
- Provide long-term sustainability for a program already serving their members

6. Cost-Effective Investment for Insurers

PediPRN reduces unnecessary emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and specialty referrals by supporting primary care providers in real time. This represents a high-value, cost-saving intervention aligned with value-based care principles.

Rhode Island has already built a strong, evidence-based model in PediPRN that expands access, strengthens providers, and improves outcomes for children and families. However, its continued success depends on sustainable funding.

Including PediPRN teleconsultation services in healthcare services funding contributions payable by insurers is a practical, equitable, and forward-looking policy decision that will ensure this critical resource remains available to Rhode Island providers and the children they serve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beth A. Bixby, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer
Tides Family Services