



To: House Committee on Finance
From: Care New England Health System
Date: May 14, 2026
Subject: CNE Support for H 8268: The Healthcare Services Funding Plan Act

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the Committee,

Care New England Health System respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of state funding for PediPRN and continued support for RI MomsPRN in the Rhode Island Department of Health Fiscal Year 2027 budget. As the parent organization of Women and Infants Hospital and Butler Hospital, two of Rhode Island’s leading providers of maternal care and psychiatric care, Care New England sees firsthand the urgent and growing need for timely, coordinated behavioral health support for children, mothers, and families across our state. With federal grant funding for PediPRN coming to an end, state support is essential to preserve access to these critical services and to ensure that Rhode Island providers can continue connecting patients to appropriate mental health care.

Care New England is deeply grateful for the General Assembly’s leadership in securing funding for RI MomsPRN in last year’s state budget. That investment has allowed healthcare professionals throughout Rhode Island to continue accessing immediate teleconsultation support to address the mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum patients. This support has made a meaningful difference for providers and families in communities across the state and has strengthened the ability of our healthcare system to respond to maternal mental health needs in real time.

The RI MomsPRN teleconsultation line has become an essential resource for providers caring for an increasing number of perinatal patients in need of mental health care and substance use treatment. Mood and anxiety disorders remain the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, and maternal substance use continues to rise. In this environment, timely access to expert consultation is not simply beneficial, it is necessary. A key strength of the program is its ability to support frontline providers while also helping connect patients to appropriate care without delay. The program’s resource and referral specialist plays a vital role by providing immediate assistance and linking patients to community based treatment services at no cost. In a state with limited perinatal psychiatric capacity, this support is especially valuable. Providers frequently need timely guidance on possible diagnoses, treatment options, and medication choices that are safest during pregnancy and lactation while patients wait weeks or even months for an appointment with a psychiatric medication provider. These consultations also provide important education on screening tools and clinical approaches that help providers better identify and respond to maternal mental health conditions in their own practices.

One of the most important benefits of RI MomsPRN is the way it strengthens clinical practice across the healthcare system. When providers apply the guidance and education they receive to future patient care, the value of the program extends far beyond any single consultation. It builds long term capacity, increases provider confidence, and improves the consistency and quality of care available to Rhode Island families.

Since the RI MomsPRN teleconsultation line launched in September 2019, clinical staff have fielded 3,500 calls from 960 providers at 310 practices across Rhode Island, helping 3,028 perinatal patients. These figures demonstrate both the extraordinary need for this service and the trust providers across the state have placed in the program. RI MomsPRN also provides timely professional education and intensive practice level support that further strengthens provider knowledge, confidence, and competency in addressing maternal mental health concerns.



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For these reasons, Care New England strongly urges the General Assembly to continue funding RI MomsPRN and to provide state support for PediPRN as its federal funding expires. Sustaining both Psychiatry Resource Network programs is a sound and necessary investment in the health of Rhode Island children, mothers, and families. Continued support will help ensure that patients across our state remain connected to appropriate mental health care when and where they need it most.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on maternal and child health.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Wagner".

Michael Wagner, MD

Care New England Health System