

Testimony in Support of H 8268 – Healthcare Services Funding Plan Act

May 13, 2026

Dear Chairperson and Members of the House Finance Committee:

I am writing as a pediatrician, psychiatrist and child and adolescent psychiatrist licensed in the state of Rhode Island to express my strong support for **House Bill H 8268, the Healthcare Services Plan Funding Act**, which would provide sustainable funding for the Rhode Island Psychiatry Resource Network programs, including MomsPRN and PediPRN.

As a Rhode Island trained physician from medical school onwards, I have been proud of the state's commitment to collaborating to support the health, particularly mental health, of the children and adolescents in this state, who are some of our most vulnerable patients in need of the most representation on their behalf.

I am also proud to have been one of the first child and adolescent psychiatrists to participate in the PediPRN program, which was modelled after the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project model, to first and foremost provide telephonic consultation to pediatric primary care throughout the state on management of child and adolescent mental health in their practices, and which program has since then grown to be much more.

During my time with PediPRN from 2017 to 2023, I worked with pediatricians, family physicians, other primary care providers, patients and families to increase access to mental health care for children and adolescents. I spoke firsthand with physicians via telephone consultations to support their ability to care for children whom they know well in their own practices, and I provided one-time psychiatric consultations to provide second opinions and management guidance for children and families with more complex needs. I witnessed with my own eyes children and adolescents receive care and support they would not have been able to access were it not for the PediPRN program, and I had seen those children go on to thrive.

Through my work with PediPRN, I had built collaborative relationships with pediatric colleagues, have been able to provide advice and create connection among our specialties, and have witnessed pediatrician colleagues build on their skills through the PediPRN Intensive Program that gave them more intense training in child and adolescent mental health care that they could bring back to their own practices, to support children and families they have known for the child's entire life.

PediPRN has made a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in the state of Rhode Island and the ability of all primary care physicians in Rhode Island to support child and adolescent mental health.

Access to timely mental health care remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Rhode Island families. Primary care providers, pediatricians, and obstetric clinicians are often the first point of contact for individuals experiencing mental health concerns, yet many lack immediate access to psychiatric consultation. Programs like MomsPRN and PediPRN fill this critical gap by offering real-time support, helping providers deliver informed, effective care when it is needed most.

The bill H 8268 represents a practical and forward-thinking solution. By requiring insurer participation in funding these programs, the bill ensures long-term sustainability without placing the burden solely on state resources. This investment will continue to strengthen early intervention efforts, reduce delays in care, and to improve outcomes for children and mothers across the state, as has already been occurring in the time of the programs' existence. Note that without an allocation by the General Assembly to sustain PediPRN (\$630,000 for FY2027), the program will be forced to close at the end of September 2026, which would be a tragedy.

I strongly urge you to support this bill for the sake of the child and families of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wei Song, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Wei" and last name "Song" clearly distinguishable.

Wei Song, MD, FAAP, FAACAP