



May 20, 2026

Dear Chair Abney and Members, House Finance Committee,

As Policy Advisor for SACRI and a member of the Behavioral Health Work Group of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council, I am pleased to support Governor's Budget amendment #16 relating to pursuing a nursing facility behavioral health per-diem add-on rate program for skilled nursing facilities to care for patients who are considered behaviorally complex and the addition of \$0.4 million in general revenue (\$0.8 million in all funds) to implement this add-on rate.

Far too often persons with BH conditions residing in nursing homes are admitted to acute care hospitals when nursing home staff are unable to adequately care for them. They may linger in hospital emergency rooms when nursing homes do not accept them back due to inability to provide the care they need. Or, they may be admitted to one of the geriatric-psych units operated by Charter Care Health and remain there for months. Recently, we were told of a person being there for a year due to lack of appropriate alternatives

RI nursing home reimbursement rates are insufficient to provide care for these complex residents. While attempts have been made in the past several years to address this critical issue, progress has not been made. Providing the resources needed for our state's nursing homes to provide person-centered care for persons with complex behavioral health conditions also needing nursing care due to chronic medical conditions requires that nursing homes receive payment rates sufficient to support needed care. A special per diem to be authorized by CMS as called for in this Budget amendment is critical for making progress to support this vulnerable population.

I urge you to support this amendment to the budget.

Sincerely
Maureen Maigret, Policy Advisor
Senior Agenda Coalition of RI (SACRI)