

Steven Sepe

From: Elisa Vieira <ejv0923@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 5:17 PM
To: House Health and Human Services Committee

Hello Chair Donovan, Vice-Chair Giiraldo, Vice-Chair Potter and distinguished members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Elisa Vieira and I am a Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC), certified by the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice. I currently live in Lincoln Rhode Island. I would like to express my support of H.5861 – relating to insurance and the coverage of services provided by licensed CLCs.

I work in RI and have been in this field for 35 years In my work as a CLC, I provide lactation support for breastfeeding families including, making individualized assessments and plans to address issues experienced during breastfeeding, making referrals, if needed, to health care providers, and providing follow-up care to the families I work with.

There is empirical data and consensus that breastfeeding provides significant benefits to mothers and babies as well as significant health care savings. There is a further consensus that breastfeeding rates are lower than optimal. Research has demonstrated that lactation support providers have a positive effect on breastfeeding initiation and continuation rates, particularly when a lactation support provider lives in, or is from, the same race and ethnic background as the individual seeking support.

Lactation support must be covered by health insurance in order to allow equitable access to all families in Rhode Island. Most families cannot afford to pay out of pocket to see a lactation support professional, especially when, more often than not, more than one visit is required in order to address breastfeeding concerns. For these reasons, I am writing to request that the Committee vote favorably on H.5861 in order to help families who are breastfeeding their babies here in Rhode Island.

Thank you for your time, and thank you to the bill sponsor, Representative Stewart, for introducing such important legislation.

Sincerely,
Elisa Vieira