



March 5, 2025

Re: In Support – H5861, An act relating to insurance and licensed certified lactation counselors

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

My name is Ellie Mulpeter, and I am the Director of the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice (ALPP), a division of the Healthy Children Project, Inc. ("Healthy Children"). ALPP operates the Certified Lactation Counselor® (CLC®), Advanced Lactation Consultant® (ALC®) and Advanced Nurse Lactation Consultant® (ANLC®) certification programs. Our mission is to promote breastfeeding and equitable access to lactation care and services. We do so by identifying qualified lactation care professionals. As of today, there are 126 CLCs in Rhode Island, and more than 24,000 CLCs nationwide.¹

There is a 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. Currently, 84.1% of women initiate breastfeeding, but many don't continue for as long or as exclusively as they'd hoped. In fact, by 6 months postpartum, only 58.3% were breastfeeding, and at one year postpartum, only 35.3% were breastfeeding.² There is a further consensus that knowledgeable and competent lactation support is needed to increase rates of breastfeeding in the U.S. For this reason, we are writing to support H5861, which would require insurer reimbursement for services provided by licensed CLCs in Rhode Island.

To increase access to care for families in Rhode Island, ALPP supports all efforts for breastfeeding support to be covered by health insurance programs. We encourage the passage of H5861 out of Committee and appreciate the Committee's consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

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¹ Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice. CLCs by State – Internal Report, March 5, 2025.

² Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. National Immunization Surveys 2018-2019, among children born in 2017. (2019). Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html>.