

Attention to Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Jacqueline Procopio, CLC, CPD

Date: March 13, 2025

Re: House Bill 5861 - Insurance Coverage of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. Thank you to Representatives Stewart, Fogarty, McGaw, Cruz, and Casimiro for sponsoring this bill.

My name is **Jacquie Procopio** and I'm writing in support of House Bill 5861. This bill requires insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors.

As a Certified Lactation Counselor I am available in the community working right in the breastfeeding parents' home. My presence actually prevents many common breastfeeding issues with early support. It may simply be normalizing so that parent understands they are doing everything correctly and encourage them to continue to meet their breastfeeding goals. It may be identifying a reason to reach out for further clinical support for an evaluation for the parent or baby. My presence means the new parent isn't alone and feels supported and this is what every breastfeeding parent needs. Support allows for their best physical and emotional health.

We all understand the benefits of human milk, but not everyone understands the individual variables of each parent and baby dyad. Breastfeeding people were not meant to be isolated without support. This leads to unhealthy outcomes which leads to more strain on the healthcare system.

Insurance coverage will enable every breastfeeding person to have the support they they deserve without a financial barrier. Certified Lactation Counselors are a diverse population working directly in the community which means transportation, culture, and language are also not barriers to receive necessary breast/body feeding support.

I urge you to pass **House Bill 5861** to require insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors to improve Rhode Islanders' access to lactation support and **add to the undervalued support of mental and physical maternal health.** Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Most sincerely,

Jacqueline Procopio, CLC, CPD

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