

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Susan Donovan, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
Via email to: HouseHealthandHumanServices@rilegislature.gov

RE: House Bill 5850 Relating to Insurance

Dear Chairwoman Donovan and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

On behalf of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (Blue Cross), I am writing with concerns over the original draft of this legislation. Blue Cross shares the sponsors' goal of ensuring that all Rhode Island children in need of therapeutic services have access to care. Blue Cross is particularly grateful to Representative Shallcross-Smith for being available for many discussions on how best to achieve the ultimate goal of providing better access to these critical services and her openness to consider possible amendments to the current draft.

Blue Cross has noted that the existing Children's Health Account, established by R.I.G.L. 41-12-29, and funded through a significant assessment on health insurance subscribers, was specifically created to ensure that children covered by commercial insurance receive the same access to therapeutic services as children covered under Medicaid. Blue Cross has also noted that the administration of the current Children's Health Account lacks the necessary transparency that would be provided by a stakeholder advisory board, similar to the one that exists to administer the Rhode Island Vaccine Assessment Program.

Blue Cross looks forward to continuing working with Representative Shallcross-Smith on the appropriate legislative language to address this important initiative, and would like to commend her for her decades-long commitment to improving the lives of the children of Rhode Island, particularly those with special needs.

Sincerely,

Shawn R. Donahue, Managing Director
Government Relations