

April 1, 2025

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

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 5863 related to behavioral healthcare reimbursement rates. Low commercial reimbursement rates have made it difficult for behavioral health providers like myself to keep up with the rising cost of living. Consequently, many providers I know no longer accept insurance. Others have moved their practices to Massachusetts or other states where the rates are higher. Some have closed their practices. As a result, a shrinking pool of in-network providers has caused consumers to go on waitlists for services they require. Additionally, it is particularly difficult to find providers from diverse backgrounds, including communities of color, sexual and gender minorities, people with disabilities, or those who speak languages other than English.

Requiring commercial insurers to provide a one-time increase to in-network outpatient mental and behavioral healthcare reimbursement rates will help improve this problem. It will help incentivize providers to accept insurance and help sustain their practice in Rhode Island. If cost of living adjustments are made on a regular basis, the behavioral healthcare workforce may increase in size and diversity. In addition, insurers will save money because consumers will have access to more outpatient services and the number of visits to hospitals and emergency departments will decrease.

Thank you in advance for your support of House Bill 5863. I look forward to hearing that this bill has passed the House.

Sincerely,

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