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

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 5863, which seeks to address the critical issue of behavioral health reimbursement rates. As a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in Rhode Island, I have witnessed firsthand the significant challenges therapists face due to the current low reimbursement rates for behavioral health services.

In recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for mental health services has surged, with an increase in mental health symptoms across all age groups. However, many therapists have been forced to reduce or completely eliminate their acceptance of insurance due to the unsustainably low reimbursement rates. This not only limits access to essential services for individuals in need but also places additional strain on therapists who are trying to provide care in a system that is increasingly difficult to navigate.

By increasing the reimbursement rates through House Bill 5863, therapists would be better equipped to expand their practices and open up more availability for clients in need of services. This would provide greater access to care for individuals struggling with mental health challenges and allow therapists to continue accepting insurance as a payment option, making services more accessible to a wider range of people.

I urge you and the members of the Health & Human Services Committee to support this important bill, which will not only improve the financial sustainability of mental health practices but also ensure that more individuals can receive the care they desperately need. The time to act is now, as the mental health needs of our community continue to grow.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I appreciate your dedication to supporting mental health professionals and ensuring better access to care for all.

Sincerely,

Kelly Alcorn

Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker