

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Jennifer Fantasia, CLC, CPD

Date: February 3, 2025

Re: House Bill 7277 - 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 Representative Stewart for sponsoring this bill, and to Representatives Donovan, Boylan, Cotter, Caldwell, Fogarty, Cruz, Giraldo, and Place for co-sponsoring.

My name is Jennifer Fantasia, and I am writing in strong support of **House Bill 7277**, which would require insurance coverage for the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors (CLCs).

I support this bill from both a personal and professional perspective. As a parent, I know firsthand how vulnerable and overwhelming the postpartum period can be, especially when feeding challenges arise. Access to skilled, compassionate lactation support made a meaningful difference in my own experience, helping me feel informed, supported, and capable during a critical time. Without that support, my feeding journey—and my mental health—would have looked very different.

As a doula and CLC, I work closely with expectant and new families and see every day how essential lactation support is to their overall health and well-being. Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors provide evidence-based, preventative care that helps families meet their feeding goals, reduces complications, and can prevent the need for more costly medical interventions later on. Yet far too often, families are forced to delay or forgo this care because it is not covered by insurance.

The lack of insurance coverage creates unnecessary barriers and inequities, particularly for families who are already navigating financial stress, medical complexity, or limited access to postpartum support. Lactation care should not be a privilege available only to those who can pay out of pocket. It is a vital part of comprehensive postpartum healthcare.

I urge you to pass **House Bill 7277** to require insurance coverage of the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors, improving Rhode Islanders' access to timely, professional lactation support and strengthening outcomes for parents, infants, and families across our state. Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to submit my testimony.