



March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Donovan and Members House Health and Human Services Committee

RE: Support for H7349

SACRI is pleased to support H7349, An Act Relating to Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals – Oversight of Artificial Intelligence Technology Use in Mental Health Care Act sponsored by Representative Spears.

SACRI'S mission is to mobilize people to implement an agenda that improves the quality of life of older Rhode Islanders and adults with disabilities. We accomplish this through *community organizing, public education, advocacy, and legislative action*. In thinking about improving *quality of life*, issues related to healthcare rank as one of SACRI's top priorities.

As the integration of AI into healthcare proceeds so rapidly it is critical that it be regulated by the state to prevent harm and adverse outcomes. This is especially important when it comes to behavioral healthcare. H7349 provides parameters for the use of AI in providing mental healthcare. It requires that a patient, patient's parent or guardian or legal representative be informed in writing that AI will be used, for what purpose, the AI tool or system that will be used and, importantly, requires that consent be provided. It also prohibits a licensed professional from using AI to make independent therapeutic decisions or for AI to directly interact with clients.

While the use of AI in healthcare has the potential to improve patient care and reduce provider administrative burden, it must be done in a way that protects patient privacy and respects professional clinical decision making and judgement in order to avoid adverse outcomes for patients. H7349 provides such protections.

Thank you for your consideration of our support.

Sincerely,

Carol Anne Costa, Executive Director