



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Department of Children, Youth and Families
Director's Office
101 Friendship St.
Providence, RI 02903

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Susan R. Donovan, Chairwoman
House Committee on Health and Human Services
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

RE: 2026 H-7142 – An Act Relating to Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals – Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics Accountability and Oversight Act

Dear Chairwoman Donovan:

Please accept this letter from the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF or “the Department”) regarding H 7142, which will be heard in your committee.

DCYF values legislative oversight and recognizes the significant role of the General Assembly in ensuring transparency, accountability, and system improvement. The Department regularly participates in Oversight hearings and remains committed to continuing that engagement.

Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) provide important services to Rhode Islanders, many of whom are children and youth. Regarding this legislation, the Department would like to provide this Committee with the following concerns:

1. This bill creates responsibilities that overlap with the existing jurisdiction of the Committee on Oversight.

This bill would permit this new Joint Oversight Committee on CCBHCs to “hold public hearings and receive testimony from relevant stakeholders”.¹ As CCBHCs serve children and their families, DCYF is a relevant stakeholder.

However, the House Committee on Oversight currently has a Subcommittee on Government Efficiency. This Subcommittee is where the Department would expect to present information about CCBHCs, if questions arose. Passing this bill and establishing a new, separate committee dedicated solely to the oversight of CCBHCs could require the Department to attend and present the same information to two separate committees, which would be redundant in both operations and cost to the Department.

2. Public hearings required by this bill risk making confidential information available to the public.

This legislation would require CCBHCs to report several pieces of data to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).² Much of this is already being done. Some of the information is even shared publicly through the work of the Governor’s Council on Behavioral Health. Before any information or data is shared, great care is taken to protect individuals’ identity and confidentiality.

¹ See [2026-H 7142](#): page 3, line 9.

² See [2026-H 7142](#): page 2, lines 26-27.

In a public oversight hearing, there is greater potential for deeper conversations that may include more specifics. Ensuring that individuals' privacy remains protected in this setting may require additional time and resources

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ashley Deckert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ashley Deckert, MSW, MA
Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Julie A. Casimiro
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy