



PO Box 1700  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

401.235.7000  
www.CommunityCareRI.org

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**Testimony: 2026 -- H 7142**

Dear Representative Donovan and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of H7142 with some caveats that I believe the committee should consider. First, let me say that CCBHC is integral to the State's healthcare infrastructure which is a primary reason from my perspective that the General Assembly should monitor its progress, accomplishments and work with whatever sitting Governor to assess its cost efficiency and capacity to reduce Medicaid expenses relative to averting unnecessary Emergency Department use and inpatient admissions.

In addition to the above, I strongly believe that it is critical for the General Assembly to monitor the work of EOHHS, particularly at the systems level. CCBHC has enormous potential to address behavioral health needs across (i.e. people living with serious/severe and persistent mental illness, children and families, unhoused individuals and families, individuals with addiction concerns, families within the child welfare system and persons with intellectual disabilities). While EOHHS has become in my opinion a large organization with many staff, its ability to coordinate and assure access to services such as CCBHC has been minimal. It is my opinion that this should matter to the General Assembly, first and foremost from an access to care perspective but also as CCBHC represents a significant strategy for cost savings.

The caveat here from my perspective is that providers absolutely can and should inform the oversight process, however, it should not place unnecessary administrative burden on providers or create a parallel process relative to submitting additional data and information to the General Assembly than is already provided to EOHHS. This is an important Governmental oversight function which goes to the operations and functioning of CCBHC as well as the role EOHHS plays in efficiently coordinating the State's resources across multiple vulnerable populations.

Sincerely,

Benedict F. Lessing, Jr., MSW  
President/CEO