



April 28, 2026

Senate Committee on Education
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Fund Early Intervention Rates

Dear Chair Gallo and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to ask you to support Senator Valverde's bill (S-2785).

My name is Marie Palumbo Hayes, LICSW and I am the Chief of Community Health at Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI), a health and human service organization with the mission "to advance equity, opportunity, and hope in our communities." In my role, I oversee a variety of programs, which includes one of Rhode Island's Early Intervention Programs.

Early Intervention is a requirement under the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. Early Intervention provides critical services for infants and young children with developmental delays. Services are provided families homes where they receive individualized care coordination, educational support, specialized nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language services. These ongoing interventions are all vital to the healthy development of the most vulnerable infants and young children.

Senator Valverde's bill proposes a Medicaid rate increase at 100% of the OHIC recommended rate increase, the first scheduled rate increase based on a new statutory rate review. The bill also requires the state to continue updating the state's Early Intervention Dashboard with information about the waiting lists, staff vacancies, and, updates with current information.

I urge you to pass Senator Valverde's bill (S-2785). Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please feel free to contact me with any questions or follow-up.

Sincerely,

Marie Palumbo-Hayes
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