



The American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

Testimony Re: SB-2562: An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – The Healthcare Services Funding Plan Act

March 31, 2026

Dear Chairman Murray & Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) in **support of SB-2562**. This bill would create sustained funding for the perinatal and pediatric psychiatric teleconsultation lines (RI MomsPRN and PediPRN) and ensure ongoing access to mental and behavioral health services and care for Rhode Island children and families. **Without predictable and sustained funding, PediPRN will be forced to close at the end of September, 2026.**

I strongly support this bill for multiple reasons outlined below:

Importance of Addressing Perinatal Mental Health

As a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist and legislative chair for District 1 of ACOG, I have long recognized the importance of addressing the mental health of my pregnant and postpartum patients. Clinical research has clearly shown perinatal depression and other mood disorders, such as bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders, can have devastating effects on mothers, infants, and families if left untreated. More than one in four pregnant women (27.1%) experience depression either immediately before, during or after their pregnancy, while 24.6% report substance use in the peri-pregnancy period. National studies have also shown mental health and substance use conditions are often underdiagnosed and engaging with care may be challenging for many. A recent study demonstrated that 45% of patients with perinatal depression did not receive any counseling and 60.4% did not take any medication (RI PRAMS study, RIDOH 2022).

Enhancing Access and Care Thanks to Partnership with the RI MomsPRN Program

In Rhode Island, we are fortunate to have many passionate providers who understand the importance of addressing perinatal behavioral health and who utilize the real-time clinical supports of the Rhode Island Maternal Psychiatry Resource Network (RI MomsPRN) Program to proactively address the mental health needs of their perinatal patients. The ongoing professional education as well as real-time clinical support with diagnosis, treatment planning, medication safety, and resource/referral offered through the RI MomsPRN teleconsultation line are critical for addressing perinatal mental health needs during a time of unprecedented demand.


Support for Sustained Funding of RI MomsPRN Services

It is critically important the General Assembly continue to support statewide services that help prenatal care workforce address mental health that has led to increased patient access to care for those impacted. While our state is fortunate to have localized mental health experts, there are too few and it can be difficult and time-consuming to navigate a complex behavioral health care system

considering the increasing demand for services that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors. RI MomsPRN was launched in September 2019, and RI Pedi PRN was launched in December 2016. **These teleconsultation programs allow providers, like obstetricians and pediatricians, to provide comprehensive and timely care for their patients.** They offer same-day specialized clinical consultations and resource/referral services for mental and behavioral health needs. They also offer training to improve providers' capacity to care for these patients. Having access to Psychiatry Resource Network teleconsultation lines such as RI MomsPRN has been a lifeline for busy providers, such as myself, who manage the complex needs of pregnant and postpartum patients.

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown in the past in extending the funding for the PRN programs. **ACOG strongly urges that you pass SB-2562 and create sustained funding for programs that support practices and providers in caring for the mental and behavioral health needs of their patients.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BC', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Beth Cronin, MD
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