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The Honorable Louis P. DiPalma
Rhode Island State Senate
Senate Committee on Finance
(Submitted electronically via SenateFinance@rilegislature.gov)

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter of support for House Bill 7127 Article 10, Section 2, Chapter 8.6, which recognizes the state's 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

The implementation of the 988-dialing code as the national number for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline represents progress in the effort for accessible mental health support. This easily remembered three-digit number provides a vital lifeline for individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts, emotional distress, or any other behavioral health crisis. In Rhode Island, 988 calls are answered by BH Link, part of Horizon Healthcare Partners. Rhode Island boasts a 98% answer rate, one of the best in-state call answer rates in the country.

We thank the Governor for recognizing the vital role of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and would ask you to consider longer-term, sustained investment in the 988 program to strengthen our public mental health infrastructure. Ensuring adequate and stable funding will allow the program to meet growing demand, expand access to crisis care, and reduce the burden on emergency services.

By supporting 988, we are committing to a more responsive, equitable, and effective system of care for individuals in mental health crisis.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

M. Campbell

Melissa Campbell
Policy Manager

The Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program
East Bay Community Action Program ~ Providence Community Health Centers
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action Agency
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health