



**Testimony Re: House Bill 7127 Article 8 Section 6: Provider Reimbursement Rates**  
**Senate Finance Committee**  
**April 9, 2026**  
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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for Article 8 Section 6 of the Governor's proposed budget for FY 2027, which would increase Medicaid provider reimbursement rates limited to the lower amount of one half of the increases recommended by the Social and Human Services Programs Review Final Report produced by the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner, or 100% of the Medicare rates. **While we support this proposal, we recommend that Medicaid reimbursement rates be increased further.**

Families across the state are struggling to find primary care providers for their children due to a shortage of pediatric health care providers that will continue to worsen. Less than half of pediatric primary care offices in Rhode Island are accepting new patients. Of the approximately 260 pediatricians currently providing primary care in RI, over a quarter are planning to retire in the next six years. The remaining practices will be unable to make up for this deficit in providers, leaving children with limited access to primary care pediatricians.

**Without addressing primary care reimbursement rates, it will remain difficult to attract pediatric primary care providers to Rhode Island.**

Primary care for children is vital and yet remains underfunded. Medicaid is the primary funding source for pediatric care. [Over half \(52%\) of children under age three are covered by Medicaid.](#) **Rhode Island's Medicaid payment rates are 25% lower than neighboring states.** Pediatric primary care providers nationally are paid less than other kinds of primary care providers by all insurers, despite having the same or more training, [according to an article in Time Magazine.](#)

The Department of Health indicated that "burnout in the field, an aging workforce, and the appeal of other specialties in medicine," are some of the factors contributing to the primary care pediatrics shortage, [according to a report from WPRI.](#) **The challenges families are currently facing finding pediatric health care will only get worse without decisive action.** Children will likely miss out on receiving their routine preventive pediatric care and screenings. Families will have to turn to urgent care centers and hospital emergency rooms when their children experience routine illnesses.

**Rhode Island needs to update pediatric primary care reimbursement rates to begin addressing the pediatric primary care crisis.** The number of primary care pediatricians will continue to decline as pediatricians retire, and the low Medicaid reimbursement rates compared to neighboring states will exacerbate the shortage: Medicaid covers half of Rhode Island's children, and Rhode Island's Medicaid reimbursement rates are lower than neighboring states.

**Pediatric primary care investments in children's health produce improved outcomes even in subsequent generations.** We all pay the long-term costs when children do not get what they need to thrive.

Increasing provider reimbursement rates will support the pediatric primary care workforce, but limiting these increases to one half of the recommended amount is not sufficient to address the shortage of primary care pediatric providers. For this reason, **we recommend fully funding the recommended increase, according to the report that will be forthcoming from the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner. Furthermore, we recommend an immediate, short-term relief of an increase to 130% of Medicare rates for outpatient clinical pediatric services, as proposed by [House Bill 7693](#), sponsored by Representative Tanzi, while the review is in process.**

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown on reviewing Medicaid provider reimbursement rates, and we urge you to support this rate increase to stabilize our pediatric healthcare system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.