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Honorable Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

I am writing in strong support of sustained funding for perinatal and pediatric psychiatric teleconsultation services (RI Moms PRN and PediPRN) which will ensure 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 have been practicing pediatrics in Rhode Island for 43 years and have witnessed an explosion of mental health issues both among my patients and their families. On a personal note my daughter, after delivering her third healthy child developed severe post partum anxiety/depression/obsessive compulsive disorder. She was paralyzed by her symptoms and was unable to for her children. Of note, she and her husband are both very well esteemed/competent physicians. They were able to access emergency psychiatric mobile care through a Mom's PRN triage system in Massachusetts and she has recovered fully. She and her family are thriving.

In my own practice, I would estimate that 30 % or more of my visits each day include some mental health concerns or problems. This increase in mental health has developed concurrent with a severe national and local shortage of psychiatric and mental health clinicians. Having prompt access to Pedi PRN allows me to quickly consult a psychiatrist who can determine if there are safety risks, provide prompt access to mental health services, and help with medication management for patients who need psychiatric medications.

Additionally, PdiPRN provides training for clinicians such as myself which allows us to effectively and safely manage very complicated and at-risk patients and families

PediPRN has been a life-saving program in my opinion

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown in the past in extending the funding for the PRN programs. **The Rhode Island American Academy of Pediatrics strongly urges that you include funding in this upcoming year's state budget for Pedi PRN and Moms PRN which provide support for primary care practices and providers in caring for the mental and behavioral health needs of their patients.** Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your anticipated support.