

ELIZABETH BURKE BRYANT, JD

Testimony in support of S-2562

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

April 2, 2026

Good evening, Chairwoman Murray and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. **My name is Elizabeth Burke Bryant, and I am a Professor of the Practice of Health Services, Policy and Practice at Brown University School of Public Health where I am based at the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute.** I am providing this testimony in my individual capacity.

I am testifying in strong support of S-2562, the Healthcare Services Funding Plan Act, sponsored by Senator DiMario, and cosponsored by Senators Lauria, Vargas, Thompson, Dimitri, Britto, Zurier, Kallman, Mack, and Acosta.

This Act would include both MOMS-PRN and Pedi-PRN teleconsultation lines in the healthcare services funding contributions payable by health insurers. The bill also provides that the additional \$30 million assessment to support primary care and other critical healthcare programs as described in Section 23-1-46.1, shall include Moms-PRN and Pedi-PRN. The bill provides that the RI Department of Health shall operate the statewide Psychiatry Resource Network (PRN) programs – Moms-PRN and Pedi-PRN, which expand Rhode Island's behavioral Health capacity by providing tailored, same day psychiatric consultation to OBGYN and pediatric primary care providers so their patients can receive timely information and referrals related to their mental and behavioral health issues.

Rhode Island's two Psychiatric Resource Network (PRN) have a successful track record of addressing the difficulty many parents have in getting timely behavioral health evaluations and treatment for their children, and the lack of direct access to mental health services in many OBGYN practices. These PRN programs support pediatric, primary care, perinatal, and other service providers in the state in providing appropriate and timely mental health care and referrals to children, perinatal patients, and mothers with mental health concerns.

Pedi-PRN (Pediatric Psychiatry Resource Network), operated by Bradley Hospital, offers pediatric primary care providers same-day mental health phone consultations with specialists who provide patient-centered information, referrals and support for children's behavioral health needs. Pedi-PRN has fielded 3,173 calls from 465 providers at 186 practices that have impacted 3,01 children to date.

MomsPRN (Maternal Psychiatry Resource Network), operated by Women & Infants in collaboration with the RI Department of Health, connects OBGYN providers to real-time phone consultations with expert clinicians who provide treatment guidance and referrals. Since the program started in June, 2024, MOMS-PRN has received 3,593 calls from 966

providers at 312 practices across the state that have impacted 3,048 pregnant and postpartum individuals.

I respectfully urge you to pass S-2562 because RI's PRN programs are cost effective and have proven track records. RI's PRN programs help to prevent mental health conditions from escalating – causing harm to families and sometimes requiring high-cost hospitalization. RI's MOMS and Pedi-PRN programs are a bright light in the behavioral health system of care and should continue for the long-term through passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for your leadership on issues affecting Rhode Island's children and families.