

Testimony in Support of S-2562 – Healthcare Services Plan Funding Act

March 31, 2026

Dear Chairperson Murray and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing as a pediatrician, psychiatrist, and child and adolescent psychiatrist who has lived and practiced in Rhode Island since 2002 to express my strong **support for Senate Bill S-2562 - the Healthcare Services Plan Funding Act**, which would provide sustainable funding for Rhode Island's Psychiatry Resource Network programs, including MomsPRN and PediPRN.

Ever since I moved to Rhode Island for my own combined residency training in pediatrics, psychiatry, and child and adolescent psychiatry, I have been impressed with our state's ability to coordinate, collaborate, and come together to support access to care for our most vulnerable patients, our children.

As an officer for the Rhode Island Council for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry from 2008 – 2023 and now as a member of the board, I have worked with colleagues in that organization alongside colleagues in the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to develop, propose, fund, and grow a child psychiatry access project similar to those running in almost every other state. Based on the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project model, we finally established PediPRN based at Bradley Hospital in 2017. When our two professional organizations declared a State of Emergency for Children's Behavioral Health in 2022, physicians caring for children turned to PediPRN to support the response and gradual recovery from that crisis.

As a member of the PediPRN Advisory Board and as a medical/psychiatric consultant in various roles to the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families, I have seen firsthand the benefits of this program as well as its ability to adapt and grow to meet the needs of children and families across our state. I have covered shifts myself and experienced the privilege of sharing my experience with pediatricians trusted first by distressed parents.

Access to timely mental health care remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Rhode Island families. Primary care providers, pediatricians, and obstetric clinicians are often the first point of contact for individuals experiencing mental health concerns, yet many lack immediate access to psychiatric consultation. Programs like MomsPRN and PediPRN fill this critical gap by offering real-time support, helping providers deliver informed, effective care when it is needed most. S-2562 represents a practical and forward-thinking solution. By requiring insurer participation in funding these programs, the bill ensures long-term sustainability without placing the burden solely on state resources. This investment will strengthen early intervention efforts, reduce delays in care, and improve outcomes for children and mothers across the state.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important piece of legislation that will allow PediPRN to continue providing support to children, families, and the physicians who care for them across our state. Given all of the current challenges to health care access, this is an opportunity to maintain something that is going well for patients and practices.

I strongly urge you to support this bill and also encourage you to reach out to me and my colleagues in both RICCAP and RIAAP if we can be helpful in answering any questions you may have about our work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'E. Lowenhaupt', written in black ink on a white background.

Elizabeth A. Lowenhaupt, MD, FAAP, DFAPA, DFAACAP
Associate Professor (Clinician-Educator)
Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry & Human Behavior
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
11 Abbottsford Ct
Providence, RI 02906