

March 31, 2026

Dear Chairman and Members of Senate Committee

Testimony in support of S: 2562- PediPRN program

I am writing to you in strong support of Senate Bill 2562 which would provide sustainable funding for our psychiatric phone consultation services for children. I am a child psychiatrist at Gateway Healthcare Community mental health center in South County, RI!

There continues to be an extensive need for behavioral health services and a shortage of available specialists. Our primary care provider colleagues have taken on the immense challenge of helping to treat and coordinate services and it is vital they have access to resources to best help patients and families. PediPRN allows for immediate consultation to discuss treatment plans and allows for patients and families to receive care in a familiar setting from a familiar provider whom already has a therapeutic relationship. Many patients take time to build trust and rapport with new providers, especially with sensitive topics such as mental health and primary care providers provide this care. They are experts in caring for children, but often need additional guidance and training to provide specialized behavioral health care.

Funding this bill would be a step towards providing equitable care for children and families across RI and allow for improved access to healthcare services. We sincerely and respectfully urge you to take this step on behalf of the children of RI and healthcare providers working with children.

Sincerely,

Olivia Hunt, MD. Child Psychiatrist