

## Rhode Island General Assembly

**To:** Senate Health & Human Services Committee

**From:** Peter Pogacar, MD, East Greenwich Pediatric

**Date:** 4/2/26

**Re: Support for S-2562**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my **strong support** for Senate Bill S-2562, which would provide sustainable funding for Rhode Island's Psychiatry Resource Network programs, including **PediPRN**.

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 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.

The benefits of these programs are far-reaching. Early access to mental health expertise can prevent conditions from worsening, reduce emergency interventions, and support healthier families and communities. In particular, supporting maternal mental health and pediatric behavioral health has lasting positive effects on child development and family stability.

As a practicing **primary care pediatrician** in RI for over 20 years, I can't think of a program as valuable, cost effective and impactful to my patients as **PediPRN, especially** to my families who are under-resourced.

Sincerely,

Peter Pogacar MD FAAP