



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

Smithfield Pediatrics is a small private practice located in Greenville, RI that provides care for children from birth to 18.

Smithfield Pediatrics strongly supports **Senate Bill 2562**. This bill would create sustained funding for the perinatal and pediatric psychiatric teleconsultation lines (RI MomsPRN and PediPRN) and 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.**

More than half of U.S. states have a mental and behavioral health resource network for perinatal providers, and 49 states have at least one pediatric mental/behavioral health resource network. Rhode Island's perinatal psychiatric resource network (PRN) is called MomsPRN, and the pediatric program is called PediPRN. RI MomsPRN was launched in September 2019, and RI Pedi PRN was launched in December 2016. **These teleconsultation programs allow providers, like obstetricians and pediatricians, to provide comprehensive and timely care for their patients.** They offer same day specialized clinical consultations and resource/referral services for mental and behavioral health needs. They also offer training to improve providers' capacity to care for these patients.

A growing number of our patients require mental or behavioral health support. Given the dire shortage of child psychiatrists in Rhode Island, our providers do a considerable amount of medication management for our patients with anxiety, depression and ADHD. PediPRN has been an invaluable resource for us as our patients often have multiple diagnoses, and management can be complex. The education and support provided by PediPRN allows our practice clinicians to provide timely, evidence-based care and improves our facility and comfort caring for our high need patients. PediPRN also offers a plethora of resources for families struggling with their child's mental health needs. This program is vital to the health of the children of Rhode Island and needs to be permanently funded. The upcoming gap in funding would severely negatively impact the stability of the program and be a huge loss for RI physicians providing care to our most vulnerable children.

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown in the past in extending the funding for the PRN programs. **Smithfield Pediatrics strongly urges that you pass Senate Bill 2562 and create sustained funding for programs that support practices and providers in caring for the mental and behavioral health needs of their patients.** Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.