

April 16, 2026

The Honorable Melissa A. Murray, Chair  
Senate Health and Human Services Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support S2687 – The Protect Mental Health Act**

On behalf of the Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families (RICCF), we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of **S2687 – The Protect Mental Health Act**.

RICCF is composed of 44 member organizations that provide and advocate for services supporting children and families across Rhode Island, including behavioral health, child welfare, education, and healthcare. Our members work every day with children, youth, and families who depend on timely access to mental health and substance use treatment, and we see firsthand the barriers that persist despite existing parity laws.

S2687 takes an important and necessary step toward closing the gap between parity in law and parity in practice. While federal protections under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act establish a framework for equitable coverage, too many families still encounter barriers such as limited provider networks, restrictive utilization management practices, and inconsistent coverage across benefit categories. This legislation strengthens enforcement by requiring insurers to analyze and demonstrate that their policies do not result in unequal access to care.

Equally important, the bill ensures that mental health and substance use services are meaningfully covered across all classifications of benefits. For children and families, access to care is not just about whether a service is technically covered, but whether it is available in a timely, appropriate, and usable way. Gaps in coverage often lead to delays in treatment, increased acuity, and greater reliance on crisis services.

Our members frequently work with children whose care does not fit neatly into traditional medical billing structures. Behavioral health treatment often requires a range of services, including outpatient therapy, intensive home-based supports, and coordinated care. Ensuring that insurers provide meaningful coverage across these levels of care is critical to maintaining a functional system that meets children where they are.

Strengthening parity enforcement will also support providers by creating more consistent expectations across payers and reducing administrative barriers that limit access to care. This is particularly important at a time when Rhode Island is facing significant behavioral health workforce challenges and increasing demand for services.

S2687 reflects a clear commitment to equity, accountability, and access in behavioral healthcare. It will help ensure that children, youth, and families can obtain the care they need without unnecessary barriers.

We respectfully urge your support for S2687. Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to Rhode Island's children and families

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tanja Kubas Meyer".

Tanja Kubas Meyer  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families