

The Honorable Chairwoman Murray
Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Rhode Island Senate
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for S3058

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amy Kalinick, and I serve as CFO and COO of Horizon Healthcare Partners. We operate Rhode Island's 988 call center and support the broader crisis response system, including BH Link. I'm writing in strong support of S3058 because it is not just about a hotline—it is about protecting and completing a behavioral health crisis system that Rhode Islanders are already relying on every day.

Over the past several years, Rhode Island has made meaningful progress. We now have a system where someone in crisis can reach a trained professional 24/7 by call, text, or chat, and be connected to in-person care when needed. That connection between 988 and BH Link is what turns a phone call into a real pathway to stabilization, not a dead end. But I want to be clear; this system is working because of extraordinary effort—not because it is sustainably funded.

Right now, much of this infrastructure has been built on temporary funding streams that do not fully cover the true cost of operating a complete crisis system. As a result, organizations like ours—and our partners—are absorbing significant unfunded costs just to keep the system functioning at the level Rhode Islanders deserve.

This bill addresses that gap. It ensures consistent, reliable funding so we can maintain what has already been built and continue to strengthen it. It allows us to reduce reliance on emergency rooms, law enforcement, and 911 for behavioral health crises—ensuring individuals get the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Just as importantly, it reinforces a shift from a reactive system to a coordinated, proactive one—where individuals are not forced to navigate fragmented services or repeat their story while in crisis.

From a financial and operational standpoint, the question before us is simple: do we sustain the system we've built—or do we risk losing momentum and shifting costs back into more expensive, less appropriate parts of the system?

This bill ensures that no Rhode Islander faces a behavioral health crisis alone—and that when they reach out, help actually leads somewhere.

Amy Kalinick
Chief Financial Officer
Horizon Healthcare Partners