



Washington County Coalition for Children

To: Senator Melissa Murray, Chair, Senate Health & Human Services Committee & Members

Date: March 24, 2026

RE: **S3065 & 3066 Concerning Mobile Response & Stabilization Services**

The Washington County Coalition for Children **strongly supports S3065 & S3066** to establish & sustain a comprehensive statewide system of **Mobile Response & Stabilization Services (MRSS)** for children in RI.

Our Coalition brings together community-based providers, schools, healthcare organizations, & family-serving agencies across Washington County. Every day, we see firsthand the increasing behavioral health needs of children & youth—and the gaps families face when a crisis occurs. Too often, distressed families are forced to call 911, go to one of our 2 local hospital Emergency Rooms (Neither hospital has pediatric psychiatric expertise), or navigate complex, fragmented systems not designed to meet children where they are.

MRSS represents a fundamentally different & more effective approach with trained behavioral health professionals responding directly to children & families in their homes, schools, and communities—de-escalating crises, stabilizing situations, & connecting families to ongoing supports. This model not only reduces unnecessary Emergency Room visits and law enforcement involvement, but also keeps children safely in their homes and communities whenever possible.

S3066 is critical because it establishes a statewide, consistent framework for MRSS, ensuring that **all families—regardless of where they live in RI—have access to timely, high-quality crisis response services**. For rural and more geographically isolated areas like Washington County, this statewide requirement is essential. For too long, Washington County and other rural areas have been left out of state service regions and denied services, leaving families & providers to fend for themselves in moments of urgent need.

S3065 ensures the **financial sustainability of this system**. Too often, services come and go in RI as federal grants expire. By requiring commercial insurers to cover MRSS & reimburse providers at no less than the Medicaid rate, this bill creates parity across payers and prevents the burden of funding these essential services from falling disproportionately on Medicaid and state resources. Without this alignment, providers cannot sustain the staffing and infrastructure required to deliver 24/7 mobile crisis response.

Together, these bills create a **coordinated, equitable, and sustainable system of care**—one that reflects what we know works for children and families. They align funding, service delivery, and community needs in a way that strengthens Rhode Island's behavioral health system as a whole.

The Washington County Coalition for Children **strongly urges your support for S3065 and S3066**. These bills represent a critical investment in the state's behavioral health crisis response system, and will ultimately result in improvements in child well-being, family stability, and the strength of our communities.

Sincerely,

Robert Hicks

Washington County Coalition for Children Website www.washcokids.org
Phone 401-788-2347 Email wccc@washcokids.org

Volunteer Lobbyist

The Washington County Coalition for Children is a coalition of area health and social service providers as well as community members working together to fill in gaps in services and support children and families in Washington County.